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"... If you understand a people's folklore, you understand the people. ... Folklore is not something far away and long ago but real and living among us. ... Here the past has something to say to the present, and the bookless world to a world that likes to read about itself."

B. A. Botkin
From the Preface

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• STORIES • TRADITIONS •

TALL TALES • AND JESTS •

# *The*
# *Pocket Treasury*
# *of*
# AMERICAN
# FOLKLORE

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EDITED BY B. A. BOTKIN

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Pocket Books, Inc., New York

BALLADS AND FOLK SONGS •

NECDOTES • LEGENDS

The Printing History of

*The Pocket Treasury of*
AMERICAN FOLKLORE

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This Pocket Book is a revised and reduced edition. It is printed from brand-new plates made from completely reset, large, clear, easy-to-read type

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# Foreword

We have heard of the boy and his sister coming home from school to tell their mother, "We learned today we have been talking prose all our lives and we didn't know it." Likewise many of us grown-ups have talked off a lot of folklore in our lives and we didn't know it was folklore—and if we had known it wouldn't have made much difference. You can't stop 'em from telling it even if they politely warn you beforehand, "Stop me if you've heard this." They (or we?) are irrepressible as the tenacious debating opponent of whom A. Lincoln said in 1858 that the only way you could make him quit would be "to stop his mouth with a corn cob."

So here we have nothing less than an encyclopedia of the folklore of America. An encyclopedia is where you get up into box-car numbers. There have been small-fry collections of folklore we might say, but this one is a big shot. It will pass the time, furnish laughter, provide entertainment. And then besides giving you the company of nice, darnfool yarn spinners, it will give you something of the feel of American history, of the gloom chasers that moved many a good man who fought fire and flood, varmints and vermin, as region after region filled with the settlers and homesteaders who proclaimed, "We are breaking sod for unnumbered millions to come."

And now that the days of those pioneers are passed, we have cities and skyscraping structures of steel and concrete that would have amazed them, motion pictures and radio transmissions that some would have declared "plumb ridiculous," not to mention the tractors which can plow without mules and the storm-proof all-steel buggies and wagons that do better than a mile a minute without a horse to pull.

And this smart later generation of youth has its folklore and our encyclopedia has plenty of specimens of Little Audrey, of Knock Knock, Who's There?, of the little moron who being told he was dead ordered that he should be moved into the living room.

Something rather sweetly modern and quite impossible to see as coming alive out of any former generation is such a story as the editor dug out of "Chicago Industrial Folklore," by Jack Conroy. There it was hiding out in the Manuscripts of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Illinois. It tells about Slappy Hooper, the World's Biggest, Fastest and Bestest Sign Painter and is a fresh modern masterpiece worth standing alongside the well-liked antiques which will not fail to be passed along from generation to generation.

A longtime book is this. One reading won't do for it. There are places in it where good fools have such love for other good fools that they must trade the follies and whims of their imaginations to help forget their troubles, even their tragedies.

Excellent authority tells us that the right laughter is medicine to weary bones. And on many a page here one may find the droll smile or the rocking laughter that moved many a humble and honest struggles on American soil as he studied, with whatever of mind he had, what the present of his country was—and what the future might be.

The people or the folk of the present hour that is and of the future that is to be, many and many of them are seen here in their toil, laughter and struggle, are heard and made known in part in the heaped-up and sprawling materials of this book. It breathes of the human diversity of these United States.

CARL SANDBURG

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# Editor's Preface

America was born in folklore. The dream of a land of plenty and opportunity which first led settlers to these shores in search of wonders found expression in songs, stories, and sayings. And what wonders they did not discover, Americans invented. They did not stop seeking, discovering, and inventing even when they reached land's end. In the course of internal migration and back-trailing, Americans have never stopped telling, listening to, and improving on travelers' tales. In endless brags and gags, tall talk and tall tales, heroic myths and sagas, blues and ballads, they express the boundless optimism and the "individual competitive aggressiveness" of a restless, ingenious, wisecracking folk with one foot in the road, who still believe in miracles and in greener fields across the next river or mountain, in the next county or state.

For all their nomadism, Americans have never lost their feeling for roots, for home and homefolks, home place and home town, home lore and home learning. Home may be wherever a man hangs his hat, but just as "God's country" is both the place one is going to and the place one has left behind, there is always a new home promised at the end of the road, or, for the "po' boy long way from home," the folks waiting back home. This is the eternal theme which, with its nostalgic, nomadic imagery and symbolism of rivers and roads, trains and shoes, arks and chariots, the Negro especially has made his own, striking the authentic "blue note" in American folk song.

Folklore, too, is the stuff that travels and sticks. It is also the greatest of borrowers. And whatever American folklore has borrowed, from the lore of other lands, from history, from literature, it has made its own. In rewriting history according to the people's notion of what is memorable and admirable or of what makes a good story, American folklore is never very far from the sources, from the beginnings of settlement, from the stuff of literature.

Having grown up in an age of print, American folklore has never lacked for collectors and compilers, who have lovingly and faithfully garnered and stored between covers every scrap of oral and local tradition. From every nook and corner of the land, from the grassroots and the pavements, from the crossroads and the forks of the creeks, have come the songs, stories, and sayings that make up this book. If at times it smells of the lamp and of printers' ink rather than of the soil, that is because a thin and shifting line separates written and unwritten tradition—a line that each is constantly crossing in order to raid the other's territory. To illustrate the two-way flow between the written and the unwritten, the old and the new, the dead-alive survivals and the living lore, a certain amount of hybrid or transitional material—floating literature, folk stuff, folk-say, folklore in the making—has been included. Those for whom this no-man's land of the folkloristic holds hidden terrors have only to remember that Brer Rabbit and Mickey Mouse are brothers under the skin and that Abe Lincoln, a folk storyteller from away back, carried a copy of *Joe Miller's Jests* (from away back) in his carpet-bag.

Because some of our best folklore has already been recorded, the present collection has drawn largely upon printed sources (many of them obscure or rare). The folklore manuscripts of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in the various states and the sound recordings of the monumental Archive of American Folk

Song in the Library of Congress have also been sampled. The source footnotes constitute a kind of running bibliography of American folklore.

The present abridgement contains about one third—the cream—of *A Treasury of American Folklore* (Crown Publishers, New York, 1944). An honest effort has been made to represent all types, traits, and regions of American folklore as originally presented. A few additions and substitutions have been made here and there as needed. The introductions have been completely rewritten in order to fit the contents and also to round out the picture. For supplementary material the reader is referred to specific selections in the original volume and also in the companion volumes, *A Treasury of New England Folklore* (1947) and *A Treasury of Southern Folklore* (1949). In this sense the present selection may be said to be a "revised and reduced edition." Because my point of view is essentially unchanged, the book still expresses my conviction that if you understand a people's folklore, you understand the people and, conversely, you have to know something about a people in order to appreciate its lore. In this Pocket Book there are few "pockets of culture." Folklore is not something far away and long ago but real and living among us. More than an old wives' tale or a tale to amuse or frighten children, more than a song to lighten the tedium of labor or leisure, folklore has a direct relation to ways of living and making a living and of looking at life.

The book is also directed to the present revival of interest and activity in the fields of American folk literature and folk music, considered as a part of American culture and America's cultural coming of age, in the light of the heightened national self-consciousness and self-criticism attending two world wars and a great depression. Here the past has something to say to the present, and the bookless world to a world that likes to read about itself, concerning our basic oral and democratic culture as the roots of the arts and as a sidelight on history.

As the folklore of a new, young, and big country, mirroring the rapid changes from rural and agricultural to urban and industrial society, American folklore is a mingling not only of the lore of peoples from all lands and of all regions of the country, but of written and unwritten tradition, the naive and the sophisticated, the very new and the very old, the social and the anti-social. In such a country men become heroes within their own lifetime, almost overnight, and living story-tellers encompass within their memories the whole cycle of development of their community or region. If the genius of this lore is for the raw, crude, cruel, and racy, rather than for the delicate and the sublime—for realistic anecdote, extravagant yarn, and comic hero legend rather than for sacred hero tale, otherworldly myth, and fairy tale, the reason is obvious. Americans, like people the world over, sing, yarn, jest, brag, create heroes, and "whistle in the dark," not only about universal themes and motives and in age-old patterns, but also about the experiences that are closest to them and interest them most.

Though it is impossible to list every one, I want to take this opportunity to thank once more all those who, in one way or another, by comments, suggestions, material (including unpublished material), editorial advice, encouragement, and assistance, contributed to the original book. I am especially indebted to Paul R. Beath; Hugo V. Buonagurio, who made the music drawings; Edmund Fuller, formerly chief editor of Crown Publishers and responsible for the original suggestion of the idea and name of *A Treasury of American Folklore;* his assistant, Bertha Krantz; and Charles Seeger, who served as music consultant for the book. I am also under heavy obligations to the collections and the staff of the Library of Congress, with which I was associated as resident Fellow in Folklore (1941-1942) and chief of the Archive of

American Folk Song (1942-1945), and to the manuscript collections and the national and state staffs of the Federal Writers' Project, which I served as Folklore Editor (1938-1939).

Some of the material contained in the revised introductions has appeared in a different form over my name or initials in *The Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* (1949,1950).

To my wife, Gertrude F. Botkin, for her invaluable and inestimable services in the preparation of both the original and Pocket Book editions, I wish to express my grateful appreciation.

B. A. Botkin

Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y.
April 20, 1950

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# Acknowledgments

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*Casy spoke. . . . "I know a bunch of stories, but I only love people."*—JOHN STEINBECK

# *The*
# *Pocket Treasury*
# *of*
# AMERICAN
# FOLKLORE

GO GIRLS COLLEGE

# *Part One*

# Tall Men

*Bring me men to match my mountains.*
*—Inscription on California State Capitol*

*There are some first-rate men there, of the real half-horse, half-alligator breed, with a sprinkling of the steamboat, and such as grow nowhere on the face of the universal earth, but just about the back bone of North America.*
*—Davy Crockett*

* * *

## I

## Chock-Full of Brag and Fight

## II

## Miracle Men and Patron Saints

# I. Chock-Full of Brag and Fight

*One said, "I am a man; I am a horse; I am a team. I can whip any man* in all Kentucky, *by G-d."*

*The other replied, "I am an alligator; half man, half horse; can whip any* on the Mississippi, *by G-d."*

*The first one again, "I am a man; have the best horse, best dog, best gun, and handsomest wife in all Kentucky, by G-d."*

*The other, "I am a Mississippi snapping turtle: have bear's claws, alligator's teeth, and the devil's tail; can whip* any man, *by G-d."*

*—Christian Schulz, Jr.*

*He [the bad man] gained this recognition not because he was bad but rather because he was a man of swift and decisive action.*

*—Capt. John R. Hughes*

---

## Introduction

### WITH A LITTLE TOUCH OF THE SNAPPING TURTLE

The shaggy, rambunctious figure of the "irrepressible backwoodsman"— half horse, half alligator—was the first of our tall men whose words were tall talk and whose exploits were tall tales. As bully, boaster, or demagogue, he knew all the uses of "apparent rage" and "vigorous language" for bluffing or blustering his way out of a tight place, beating the other fellow to it, and letting off steam. Men with the bark on must also be men of gumption and gusto who could *talk* as well as *walk* tall into and out of scrapes, scrimmages, rows, and sprees.

> "Well, I will walk tall into varmint and Indian; it's a way I've got, and it comes as natural as grinning to a hyena. I'm a regular tornado, tough as a hickory, and long-winded as a nor'-wester. I can strike a blow like a falling tree, and every lick makes a gap in the crowd that lets in an acre of sunshine. Whew, boys!" shouted Mike, twirling his rifle like a walking-stick around his head, at the ideas suggested in his mind. "Whew, boys! if the Choctaw divils in them ar woods thar would give us a brush, just as I feel now, I'd call them gentlemen. I must fight something, or I'll catch the dry rot—burnt brandy won't save me."[1]

From his fierce "displays of animal spirits" and his "antic demonstrations of hostility," the backwoods bully and "stentorian braggart" became known as a roarer, screamer, snorter, or squealer—ring-tailed, Salt River, Mississippi. Back of these nicknames was the notion of "some powerful and formidable animal that roars in the forest or on the prairie." A composite of the horse, the alligator, the snapping turtle, and even the tornado, the earthquake, and the steamboat—terms suggestive of energy, violence, vehemence, size, strength, speed, noise—the roarer resembled those hybrid and hoaxing monsters of "apocryphal zoology," the "fearsome critters." And like them he was more preposterous than terrible in his freakish, fanciful traits.

> I can walk like an ox, run like a fox, swim like an eel . . . make love like a mad bull.

> I'm shaggy as a bear, wolfish about the head, active as a cougar, and can grin like a hyena, until the bark will curl off a gum log. There's a sprinkling of all sorts in me, from the lion down

---

[1] T. B. Thorpe, "The Disgraced Scalp-Lock," *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 41.

> to the skunk; and before the war is over, you'll pronounce me an entire zoological institute. . . .[1]

The animal nomenclature of frontier slang (old hoss, live hoss, a whole team, a pretty severe colt, a right smart coon, a gone coon) was part of backwoods mythology, with its totemic transfer of names and traits (especially brute strength, courage and cunning) from animals to men. The most descriptive and intensive of these nicknames was half horse, half alligator—a term applied generally to the wild, tough, raw backwoodsman but more particularly to the Kentucky hunter and the amphibious boatman of the Ohio and the Mississippi.

Typical of the "alligator half-breed's" strenuous ritual in challenging his fellows to combat was the performance of Ralph Stackpole, the rascally captain of the horse thieves in Robert Montgomery Bird's Kentucky romance *Nick of the Woods* (1837). The author likens the Salt River roarer in his rage to the belligerent alligator, roaring, blowing the water from his nostrils, lashing it with his tail, whirling round and round, churning the water into foam.

> He flapped his wings and crowed, until every chanticleer in the settlement replied to the note of battle; he snorted and neighed like a horse; he bellowed like a bull; he barked like a dog; he yelled like an Indian; he whined like a panther; he howled like a wolf; until one would have thought he was a living menagerie, comprising within his single body the spirit of every animal noted for its love of conflict.[2]

## I CAN OUTSPEAK ANY MAN

In his "wild rodomontades" this "living menagerie," the ring-tailed roarer, made his animal demonstrations articulate, if not entirely plausible, in strings of outrageous gab or tall talk. This was strong language striving to outdo itself. While his screaming recalled the epic brags and "flytings" of Anglo-Celtic tradition, its hyperbolic accents were those of the Western demagogue, the backwoods stump-speaker and exhorter.

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[1] For these and other animal comparisons, see *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 275.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

As a species of backwoods vernacular, tall talk was studded with idiomatic and figurative expressions relating to familiar objects, creatures, and activities. "I wish I may run on a sawyer if I didn't." "I'll be choked with a saw-log if I do." "I wouldn't risk a huckleberry to a persimmon that we don't every soul get treed and sink to the bottom like gone suckers." "I told him I knew him as well as a squirrel knows a hickory-nut from an acorn." "You do take the rag off the bush" (originating perhaps in the improvised target used in shooting matches[1]). "Quicker nor a alligator can chew a puppy"; "choked to death like a catfish on a sandbank"; "harder nor climbin' a peeled saplin', heels uppard."[2] "He dropped on him like a catamount on a coon."[3]

Side by side with the poetry of tall talk was its bombast of "intensive and extravagant epithets" (awful, powerful, monstrous, dreadful, mighty, almighty, all-fired), strained blends and grotesque coinages (angelliferous, helliferocious, slantindicular, catawampously—the last meaning "fiercely, eagerly, completely," from catamount[4]). Like a good deal of slang, these extravagant terms, only a few of which have survived (e.g., cantankerous, rambunctious, highfalutin), more often reflected poverty than richness of thought, just as backwoods boasting often proceeded from having too little rather than from having too much.

As surely as coonskin cap and deerskin shirt and leggings, tall talk was part of the conventional, histrionic trappings of the backwoods stereotype.

---

[1] M. Schele de Vere, *Americanisms* (1872), p. 197. The foregoing examples are from *Westward, Ho!* (1832) by James K. Paulding.

[2] Examples from *Mike Fink: A Legend of the Ohio* (1848), by Emerson Bennett.

[3] Schele de Vere, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

[4] *Ibid.*

> I can promise you, in no part of this volume, the wild rodomontades of "Bushfield"; nor can I regale you with the still more delicate repast of a constant repetition of the terms "bodyaciously" [wholly], "tetotaciously" [totally], "obflisticated" [obfuscated, put out of the way]. Though I have had much intercourse with the West, I have never met with a man who used such terms unless they were alluded to, as merely occupying a space in some printed work. They have, however, been made to enter, as a component part, into the character of every backwoodsman. . . .[1]

## I'M THAT SAME DAVY CROCKETT, FRESH FROM THE BACKWOODS

In April, 1831, the tall-talking ring-tailed roarer reached the New York stage in James K. Paulding's "lost play," *The Lion of the West.* The hero, Colonel Nimrod Wildfire, "a raw Kentuckian recently elected to Congress" (one of the most successful roles in James H. Hackett's career), bore an unmistakable resemblance to the meteoric Davy Crockett (1786-1836), then nearing the end of his second term in Congress. The one surviving speech of the play, which has come down to us in several newspaper, almanac, and jokebook versions, is almost identical with a scene in the anonymous *Sketches and Eccentricities of Col. David Crockett, of West Tennessee* (1833).[2] The inclusion of some of Crockett's best stories in this work (copyright and presumably written by James S. French) is said to have provoked the "gentleman from the cane" into writing (at least in part) *Narrative of the Life of David Crockett, of the State of Tennessee. . .*

---

[1] Preface to *Sketches and Eccentricities of Col. David Crockett, of W*[illegible] *Tennessee* (1833).

[2] See below, "A Vote for Crockett." For the Wildfire version, see *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 13-14.

*Written by Himself* (1834). Of the several autobiographical volumes attributed to Crockett, this one established its author as surely in American literature as he is ingrained in American folklore. With the same showmanship that Crockett displayed in real life, the *Narrative* embroiders the facts of his career into a gorgeous yarn of the "irrepressible backwoodsman's" progress from bear hunter and Indian fighter to "coonskin Congressman" and Texas patriot. The resulting picture, drawn in the bold strokes of political caricature and the broad grins of the tall tale, is, by his own word, "the exact image of its Author."

After his death at the Alamo in 1836, the Crockett almanacs (1835-1856) inflated comic legend into slapstick myth. Here the "gamecock of the wilderness" becomes a riproaring giant and gargantuan buffoon, who performs impossible feats in a backwoods fairyland along with such boon companions as Mike Fink and Ben Hardin (named for the Kentucky Congressman). The transformation of this prototype of the forks-of-the-creek philosopher and grassroots politician, rustic wag and wisecracker, into the wonderful traveler and mischievous prankster of the Munchausen-Eulenspiegel breed forms one of the most fascinating chapters in American myth-making and hero worship. With the Georgia lawyer and editor, A. B. Longstreet, whose *Georgia Scenes* appeared in the Augusta *States Rights Sentinel* between 1832 and 1835, Crockett shares honors as the creator of the sectional humor of the Old Southwest.

Folk memories of Crockett linger in hunting yarns told in Tennessee and Arkansas. Throughout his legend and myth he is essentially the hunter, in pursuit of ever bigger and better game, from varmints and politicians to the challenging elements. Nowhere is the mythology of the backwoods more alive and appealing than in the contests of cunning and strength between Crockett and his animal friends and foes, in which Crockett is half-varmint and every varmint is half-Crockett.

When Crockett died, cut down in the prime of life, as the almanac tells us, the people mourned and the animals heaved a sigh of relief.

> Thar's a great rejoicin' among the bears of Kaintuck, and the alligators of the Mississippi rolls up thar shining ribs to the sun, and has grown so fat and lazy that they will hardly move out of the way for a steamboat. The rattlesnakes come up out of thar holes and frolic within ten foot of the clearings and the foxes goes to sleep in the goose-pens. It is bekase the rifle of Crockett is silent forever, and the print of his moccasins is found no more in our woods. His old fox-skin cap hangs up in the cabin, and every hunter, whether he are a Puke, a Wolverine, or a Sucker, never looks at it without turnin' away his head and droppin' a salt tear.[1]

## MY NAME IS FIGHT (MIKE FINK)

When it came to pure orneriness and hell-raising, Davy Crockett was no match for a "helliferocious fellow" like Mike Fink. The truth is that no landlubber, even as smart as Davy, could compete with the rivermen in variety and ingenuity of "rascality with humor," any more than men of other nomadic callings—hunters, trappers, lumbermen—could surpass the keelboatmen and flatboatmen of the West in hardihood and profligacy. The keelboatmen's "king," who recognized no law "save his own wishes" and whose word was their law, Mike Fink was known as the "Snag" on the Mississippi and the "Snapping Turtle" on the Ohio.

Born at old Fort Pitt in 1770, he early acquired a reputation as an Indian scout and a crack shot. As the country filled up and the Indians were pushed across the lakes and beyond the Mississippi, Mike and many of his fellow scouts, devoted to the wild, free life of the frontier, joined the newly emerging class of boatmen and continued their roving, preatory exploits on the rivers and in the river towns. Here their animal spirits and appetites found an outlet in pranks and depredations which vied with but stopped short of the black-hearted villainy of Colonel Plug, Jim Girty, the Harpes, Samuel Mason, John A. Murrell, and all the other rapacious, bloodthirsty outlaws, boat wreckers, river and land pirates of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys.[1] Among the boatmen's stunts and escapades, Mike's, in particular, "were always characterized by a boldness of design and a sagacity that showed no mean talent on Mike's part."[2]

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[1] Richard M. Dorson (ed.), *Davy Crockett, American Comic Legend* (1939), p. 25.

Once, however, Mike carried his lawless daredeviltry too far—beyond the point where "even a crime might take on the aspect of a good joke." In 1822, outdone by the steamboat, the "last of the boatmen" left his broadhorn to follow the trapping frontier up the Missouri in the service of the Mountain Fur Company. At Fort Henry, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, while engaged in his favorite sport of shooting, William Tell fashion, a tin cup or can of whisky off another man's head, with a quart as a prize, he aimed too low and shot his friend Carpenter in the forehead. For this act of carelessness or treachery he paid with his life soon after, at the hands of Carpenter's avenger, Talbott. Thus Mike's death, like his life, followed nature's law of tooth and claw, which asks and gives no quarter:

> I never was particular about what's called a fair fight; I just ask half a chance, and the odds against me, and if I then don't keep clear of snags and sawyers, let me spring a leak and go to the bottom. It's natur that the big fish should eat the little ones. I've seen trout swallow a perch, and a cat would come along and swallow the trout, and perhaps on the Mississippi, the alligators use up [feed on] the cat, and so on to the end of the row.[3]

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[1] *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*, pp. 211-228.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

[3] T. B. Thorpe, "The Disgraced Scalp-Lock," *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 41.

## IT'S MY TIME TO HOWL

West of the Mississippi the tradition of the backwoods bully and boaster did not die but passed into the pose of the bogus or mock bad man. The latter was distinguished from the true bad man or killer by his flagrant violation of the frontier code of silent battle, which was "Shoot first and talk afterward." According to Stanley Vestal, "boisterous noise was a token of peace and good will" among both the Plains Indians and cowboys.[1] When the rootin'-tootin'-shootin' cowboy rode into town, yelling:

I'm wild and woolly
  And full of fleas;
Ain't never been curried
  Below the knees.
I'm a wild she wolf
  From Bitter Creek,
And it's my time
  To h-o-w-l, whoop-i-e-e-ee,[2]

he was "making whoopee," or on a spree. ("Whoopee" or "Whoop," the cowboy's war-cry, carried the animal allusions of the ring-tailed roarer back to the fifteenth century call to sheep.[3])

In his boasting chants and yells the pseudo bad man proclaimed his intestinal fortitude in lurid "fearsome critter" terms. In addition to the usual animal traits, he claimed a mythical animal nurse and a more than usual endowment of teeth and other hard substance in his makeup. Crockett, it will be recalled, boasted of being "half chicken hawk and steel-trap" and of his wilderness raising—"born in a cane brake, cradled in a sap trough, and clouted with coon skins."

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[1] *Short Grass Country* (1941), pp. 26-27.
[2] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 62.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 59n.

The yipping cowboy was also "raised in a canebrake, fed in a hog trough, suckled by a she-bear" or "raised in a canebrake and suckled by a lion."[1] Or:

> Half horse, half alligator, with a little touch of a snapping turtle, clumb a streak of lightning, and slid down a locust tree a hundred feet high, with a wild cat under each arm and never got a scratch. Whoopee-yip-ho!

> I come to this country riding a lion, whipping him over the head with a .45 and picking my teeth with a .38 and wearing a .45 on each hip, using a cactus for a piller, whe-ee-e! I'm a two-gun man and a very bad man and won't do to monkey with. Whe-ee-o, I'm a bad man! Whoopee!

> Raised in the backwoods, suckled by a polar bear, nine rows of jaw teeth, a double coat of hair, steel ribs, wire intestines, and a barbed wire tail, and I don't give a dang where I drag it. Whoopee-whee-a-ha![2]

As the cowboy playing bad man stole a bit of Crockett's and Fink's thunder, so the backwoods stump-speaker might have taken lessons from the ring-tailed roarer, or vice versa. Nowhere is the identity between screaming and making the eagle scream more clearly revealed than in the flamboyant rhetoric that does double duty in the raft scene in Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* (1874)[3] and the mythical speech, "Change the Name of Arkansas? Hell, No!" Here the blustering bogus bad man and the fulminating legislator alike betray the origins of tall talk in the highfalutin, sky's-the-limit style of all provincial, boastful Americans whose motto is Sam Slick's "Braggin' saves advertisin'."

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 61n.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 64. For other cowboy and bad man yells, see pp. 69-66 *ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-56.

## A COLT MAKES ALL MEN EQUAL

In 1835, having lost his seat in Congress, Crockett told his constituents that he was through with politics and that they might all go to hell and he would go to Texas. On the way out West, he heard from the roving Bee Hunter something about the state of society in the Rio Grande country, or "Hell on the Border."

> . . . It is very common to hear the inquiry made, "What did he do that made him leave home?" or, "What have you come to Texas for?" intimating almost an assurance of one's being a criminal. Notwithstanding this state of things, the good of the public, and of each individual, is so evidently dependent on the public morals, that all appear ready to discountenance and punish crime.[1]

Soon "G.T.T." ("Gone to Texas") was to be a synonym not only for fugitive from justice but also for "gone to the devil or the dogs." The Texas Revolution and the Mexican War, the bloody conflict over the Free Soil issue, Civil War bushwhacking, the outlawing of guerrillas, the wars of the range (between cowboys and rustlers, between rival ranchmen, and between cattlemen and sheepmen), the land, gold and silver rushes, "terminus towns" and boom towns—these were some of the factors that made for the rapid growth and spread of viciousness and skulduggery, social anarchy and homicidal lawlessness beyond the Mississippi, where the "irrepressible backwoodsman" became the "wild man," "he-man" and "bad man" of the West and the "six-shooter was the law of the land."

In the same year that Crockett went to Texas, the need of protection against border bandits, Mexican raiders, and hostile Indians called into existence the Texas Rangers, who, it was said, could "ride like a Mexican, trail like an Indian, shoot like a Tennesseean, and fight like a very devil."[1] Their legendary reputation is perhaps best known through the much repeated story of the Ranger who, upon answering a riot call and being greeted by the mayor with the disappointed query, "Where are the others?" promptly replied, "Hell! ain't I enough? There ain't but one fight [riot, mob], is there?"[2]

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[1] *Life of David Crockett* (1860), pp. 330-331.

It is difficult to conceive of the Rangers without the revolutionary new weapon, the six-shooter, which Samuel Colt perfected for their use and which "multiplied every soldier by six." As the ideal gun for the man on horseback, for chasing Indians, for single combat and for fancy shooting, the six-shooter succeeded the rifle as the folklore weapon par excellence. Fortunately for folklore, it revolutionized not only Indian warfare and frontier justice but also frontier outlawry, and became a necessity for the cowboy's protection as well as a conventional prop of dime-novels, Western romances and films, and horse-operas.

The contribution of the six-shooter to folklore may be gauged from its picturesque nicknames (peacemaker, equalizer, persuader, shootin'-iron, talkin'-iron, hardware, artillery) and the many apt terms and phrases for plain and fancy shooters and shooting (gunfighter, gunman, two-gun man, thumber, gun-tipper, fanning, slip and hip shooting, hip and cross draw, single and double roll, pin-wheel, border shift).[3]

The law of the six-shooter (which had more to do with the frontier code of self-defense and fair play than with "the law" as such) also contributed a number of axioms and maxims, both practical and ethical: "Draw quick and shoot straight," "Shoot first and never miss," "Shoot first, think and ask questions afterward," "Take your time,"

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[1] John S. Ford. See Wayne Gard, *Frontier Justice*, (1949), p. 217.

[2] For the original anecdote, told of Captain W. J. (Bill) McDonald when the citizens of Dallas sought to keep the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight from being held there in 1895, see *ibid.*, p. 321.

[3] Cf. Ramon F. Adams, *Cowboy Lingo* (1936) and *Western Words* (1944).

"Never try to run a bluff with a six-gun." To kill an unarmed man or to shoot a man in the back or unawares was murder. To take a man's life in self-defense, in support of the law, or in punishment for a crime was justifiable homicide.

The code was summed up and personified by Wild Bill Hickok, the "prince of pistoleers."

> The most of the men I have killed, it was one or t'other of us, and at sich times, you don't stop to think; and what's the use after it's all over?
>
> That I have killed men, I admit, but never unless in absolute self-defense, or in the performance of an official duty. I never, in my life, took any mean advantage of an enemy. Yet, understand . . . , I never allow a man to get the drop on me.[1]

One not to be "put upon," who had his honor and his reputation as well as his life to defend, Wild Bill soon became a legend as a "bad man to fool with," that is, a man dangerous when opposed or aroused and quietly and coolly efficient in the exact science of killing. And since he was as handsome as he was deadly, and something of a dandy and a lady-killer as well as a showman, his looks and personal attractiveness belied his "wild" reputation and greatly enhanced his legend. While history has placed him, along with Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and Luke Short, in the category of peace officers who were not above shooting on inadequate provocation or to settle a private feud, the popular imagination has glorified him as the ideal all-round, all-American "plainsman" (rather than merely a "professional Westerner" like Buffalo Bill), who touched the frontier at almost every point as woodsman and Indian fighter, Civil War spy and sharpshooter, frontier scout and marshal, and the "fastest and surest man with a six-shooter that the West ever knew."

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[1] Frank J. Wilstach, *Wild Bill Hickok* (1926), p. 242.

## A BETTER HEARTED FELLOW YOU SCARCE COULD HOPE TO SEE

Gossip and controversy, like showmanship, contribute to a popular hero's legend. Thus while Wild Bill's admirers and detractors may agree on his ability as a man-killer and even a lady-killer, they are divided on the question as to whether he was a gunfighter, who fought fair, or a gunman, who didn't. In the case of Billy the Kid, who is both the "Southwest's most famous desperado" and the "darling of the common people," hero worship has surrounded a hired gun-thug with the halo of the "good bad man." Good bad man or bad good man, the killer concealed a heart of gold under a rough, hardened exterior or (like Wild Bill) a tiger under a gentle exterior.

It is generally agreed that most killers are neither all bad nor all good but men with a dual or split personality. Even a peace officer like Wyatt Earp, it is said, might be on the side of the angels one day and on the side of Satan the next, and "in between, with a foot in each camp." Or, like Billy the Kid, he might, according to Pat Garrett, have "a lurking devil in him . . . a good-humored, jovial imp or a cruel and bloodthirsty fiend, as circumstances prompted." The essential, compensating goodness of the "rough diamond" comes through in bravery, loyalty, and generosity toward the weak and the poor, women and children—"He'd a hand and a heart and a brain." Thus Billy the Kid has been described as a "freehearted, generous boy," who would "give a friend the shirt off his back"; Jesse James as a "strictly honest man in paying his personal debts," who "never harmed nor insulted women"; Sam Bass as one who "always paid for what he got from individuals" and "was particularly considerate of poor people"; and Pretty Boy Floyd as a "nice, soft-spoken boy, good to his mother." Of Quantrell the ballad says, "He'd take from the wealthy and give to the poor," and of Jesse James, "He stole from the rich and he gave to the poor." Of the latter, Sam Bass, and the Alabama Robin Hood, Rube Burrow, alike has been told the classic story of the chivalrous outlaw who pays off the poor widow's mortgage and then waylays and robs the rich mortgage owner. That the good bad man did not always justify the blind faith of the hero-worshippers is implied in the legendary epitaph for Sam Bass, "Would That He Were Good as He Was Brave."[1]

Bad man or peace officer, the killer satisfied the heroic requirements of the epic warrior by such phenomena as daring challenges, thrilling single combats, miraculous escapes, and dying, as he lived, violently and gamely, usually through treachery and in ambush. Jesse James was shot from behind by "that dirty little coward," Robert Ford, brother of a former accomplice of his, in order to claim the reward. Billy the Kid was trailed to his sweetheart's home and shot in the dark by his erstwhile friend, Sheriff Pat Garrett. Sam Bass was double-crossed by one of his own gang, Jim Murphy, and slain in ambush at Round Rock. Wild Bill, playing poker in a Deadwood saloon, was shot in the back by Jack McCall—presumably to avenge the slaying of his brother by Wild Bill. (When Bill was picked up, two black aces and two black eights fell out of his hand—a combination known thereafter to superstitious gamblers as the "Dead Man's Hand.")

To symbolize and dramatize his skill with weapons and horses, the killer is often endowed with a favorite, marvelous gun and steed. During the Civil War Wild Bill's mare Black Nell, with her "trick of dropping quick," saved his life more than once. In Sam Bass's life horses figured prominently. Besides the Denton mare, which he matched in all races, he had a horse that carried him down canyon sides "where human foot could not find place, carrying on unfalteringly, and at last, when danger threatened, waking its sleeping master by shaking him"—an adaptation of Swift Nick and Dick Turpin.[1]

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[1] W. P. Webb, "The Legend of Sam Bass," *Legends of Texas*, Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Number III (1924), edited by J. Frank Dobie, p. 229.

And as in the case of many a tribal or national hero, survival legends confer immortality on the killer or at least lend indestructibility to his reputation. Rumors that Billy the Kid was still alive persisted as late as 1926. No less than seventeen persons, according to his granddaughter, have claimed to be the "original Jesse James." From Texas comes the legend that Quantrell, badly wounded but not killed during the Civil War, was for many years a country school teacher in East Texas (akin to the Marshal Ney legend). In Wyoming, tradition has clung to the notion that Tom Horn was cut down alive from the gallows and spirited away. In the same way, though the Wild West is dead and the killer, like the buffalo, roams the plains no more, the spirit of frontier chivalry and justice lives on in the Lone Ranger, whose mask symbolizes the enigma of the killer's personality and reputation.

## I'M LOOKIN' FOR THE BULLY OF THE TOWN

The Western bad men may have had one foot in Satan's camp, but there is no record of any of them having sold his soul to the devil for an old Stetson hat, like "that bad man Stackalee." The magic of the hat included the ability to turn into an animal, which he shared with the Alabama bad man, Railroad Bill. (Railroad Bill once changed himself into a black dog and joined the bloodhounds on his trail that led to his girl's house, then "stayed behind to do some courtin' when the Sheriff left."[2])

Apart from his supernatural aspects, Stackalee is typical of the "bully of the town" that developed out of the personal and group conflicts of Negro migration and urbanization. Besides Stackalee and Railroad Bill, the Negro folk had Lazarus, Dupree, Brady, and especially John Hardy (long confused with John Henry) to sing about and to put up beside the white outlaw. The original Stackalee was a roustabout, stoker, or cabin-boy of the Mississippi river-packet era, named, like many a Negro boy of the time, for the big, fast Lee Line packet, *Stacker Lee*, or for Captain James Lee's son Stacker, who gave the boat his name and was much admired for his prowess as a steamboat man and a courtin' man. His song was originally a roustabout song, sung and no doubt composed on the same levees that Stackalee's girl friend, Stack o' Dollars, ruled with her big fist. In size, strength, and power, she resembles Annie Christmas, the New Orleans lady wildcat, and the female screamers of the Crockett almanacs.

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[1] Charles J. Finger, *Frontier Ballads* (1927), p. 71.

[2] Carl Carmer, in *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*, pp. 239-241.

When Stackalee's "jamboree" and devilment got too much for even the devil to stand, the latter made Stack lose his hat and so his magic, shooting Billy Lyons in a barroom brawl (some say in Memphis and some say in St. Louis) that sent him to the Jefferson pen and ultimately to hell. But if the dream that Stack dreamed in jail was any sign, he was too hot for even hell to handle.

When they got into the scuffle, I heard the devil shout,
"Come and get this bad man before he puts my fire out."

The next time I seed the devil he was scramblin' up the wall,
Yellin', "Come an' get this bad man 'fore he mops up with us all."

—B. A. B.

## Davy Crockett: Gamecock of the Wilderness

### A VOTE FOR CROCKETT

"I had taken old Betsy," said he, "and straggled off to the banks of the Mississippi river; and meeting with no game, I didn't like it. I felt mighty wolfish about the head and ears, and thought I would spile if I wasn't kivured up in salt, for I hadn't had a fight in ten days; and I cum acrost a fellow floatin' down stream settin' in the stern of his boat fast asleep. Said I, 'Hello, stranger! if you don't take keer your boat will run away with you'—and he looked up; and said he, 'I don't value you.' He looked up at me slantendicler, and I looked down upon him slantendicler; and he took out a chaw of turbaccur, and said he, 'I don't value you that.' Said I, 'Cum ashore, I can whip you—I've been trying to git a fight all the mornin''; and the varmint flapped his wings and crowed like a chicken. I ris up, shook my mane, and neighed like a horse. He run his boat plump head foremost ashore. I stood still and sot my triggurs, that is, took off my shurt, and tied my galluses tight around my waist—and at it we went. He was a right smart coon, but hardly a bait for such a fellur as me. I put it to him mighty droll. In ten minutes he yelled enough, and swore I was a ripstavur. Said I, 'Ain't I the yaller flower of the forest! And I am all brimstone but the head and ears, and that's aquafortis.' Said he, 'Stranger, you are a beauty: and if I know'd your name, I'd vote for you next election.' Said I, 'I'm that same David Crockett. You know what I'm made of. I've got the closest shootin' rifle, the best 'coon dog, the biggest ticlur, and the ruffest racking horse in the district. I can kill more lickur, fool more varmints, and cool out more men than any man you can find in all Kentucky.' Said he, 'Good

From *Sketches and Eccentricities of Col. David Crockett, of West Tennessee*, pp. 144-145. New York: Printed and Published by J. & J. Harper. 1833.

mornin', stranger—I'm satisfied.' Said I, 'Good mornin', sir; I feel much better since our meetin' '; but after I got away a piece, I said, 'Hello, friend, don't forget that vote.' "

## GRINNING THE BARK OFF A TREE

That Colonel Crockett could avail himself, in electioneering, of the advantages which well applied satire ensures, the following anecdote will sufficiently prove:

In the canvass of the Congressional election of 18—, Mr. ***** was the Colonel's opponent—a gentleman of the most pleasing and conciliating manners—who seldom addressed a person or a company without wearing upon his countenance a peculiarly good-humored smile. The Colonel, to counteract the influence of this winning attribute, thus alluded to it in a stump speech:

"Yes, gentlemen, he may get some votes by *grinning,* for he can *outgrin me*—and you know I ain't slow—and to prove to you that I am not, I will tell you an anecdote. I was concerned myself—and I was fooled a little of the wickedest. You all know I love hunting. Well, I discovered a long time ago that a 'coon couldn't stand my grin. I could bring one tumbling down from the highest tree. I never wasted powder and lead, when I wanted one of the creatures. Well, as I was walking out one night, a few hundred yards from my house, looking carelessly about me, I saw a 'coon planted upon one of the highest limbs of an old tree. The night was very *moony* and clear, and old Ratler was with me; but Ratler won't bark at a 'coon—he's a queer dog in that way. So, I thought I'd bring the lark down in the usual way, *by a grin.* I set myself—and, after grinning at the 'coon a reasonable time, found that he didn't come down. I wondered what was the reason—and I took another steady grin at him. Still he was *there.* It made me a little

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*Ibid.*, pp. 125-127.

mad; so I felt round and got an old limb about five feet long, and, planting one end upon the ground, I placed my chin upon the other, and took *a rest.* I then grinned my best for about five minutes; but the cursed 'coon hung on. So, finding I could not bring him down by grinning, I determined to have him—for I thought he must be a droll chap. I went over to the house, got my axe, returned to the tree, saw the 'coon still there, and began to cut away. Down it come, and I ran forward; but d—n the 'coon was there to be seen. I found that what I had taken for one, was a large knot upon the branch of the tree and, upon looking at it closely, I saw that *I had grinned all the bark off, and left the knot perfectly smooth.*

"Now, fellow-citizens," continued the Colonel, "you must be convinced that, in the *grinning line,* I myself am not slow—yet, when I look upon my opponent's countenance, I must admit that he is my superior. You must all admit it. Therefore, be wide awake—look sharp—and do not let him grin you out of your votes."

## THE COON-SKIN TRICK

While on the subject of election matters, I will just relate a little anecdote about myself, which will show the people to the East how we manage these things on the frontiers. It was when I first run for Congress; I was then in favor of the Hero [Andrew Jackson], for he had chalked out his course so sleek in his letter to the Tennessee legislature that,

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From *Life of Colonel David Crockett,* Written by Himself, pp. 240-245. Philadelphia: G. G. Evans. 1860.

For a similar trick involving a "gopher" (terrapin) and its possible connection with the coonskin story, see Kenneth W. Porter, "Davy Crockett and John Horse: A Possible Origin of the Coonskin Story," *American Literature,* Vol. XV (March, 1943), No. 1, pp. 10-15.

For another kind of coonskin trick, in which the Yankee "skins" the backwoodsman, and the use of coonskins for currency, cf. the following account:

"I was much amused by a story told me about these skins. 'Money was at one time so scarce in Indiana, that racoon skins passed current, being handled from one person to another. But some Yankees (New Englanders) forged these notes, by sewing a racoon's tail to a cat's skin, and thus destroyed the currency.' This, like Sam Patch, says I, "There can be no mistake in him," and so I went ahead. No one dreamt about the monster and the deposits at that time, and so, as I afterward found, many like myself were taken in by these fair promises, which were worth about as much as a flash in the pan when you have a fair shot at a fat bear.

But I am losing sight of my story. Well, I started off to the Cross Roads dressed in my hunting shirt, and my rifle on my shoulder. Many of our constituents had assembled there to get a taste of the quality of the candidates at orating. Job Snelling, a gander-shanked Yankee, who had been caught somewhere about Plymouth Bay, and been shipped to the West with a cargo of codfish and rum, erected a large shantee, and set up shop for the occasion. A large posse of the voters had assembled before I arrived, and my opponent had already made considerable headway with his speechifying and his treating, when they spied me about a rifle shot from camp, sauntering along as if I was not a party in business. "There comes Crockett," cried one. "Let us hear the colonel," cried another; and so I mounted the stump that had been cut down for the occasion, and began to bushwhack in the most approved style.

I had not been up long before there was such an uproar in the crowd that I could not hear my own voice, and some of my constituents let me know that they could not listen to me on such a dry subject as the welfare of the nation until they had something to drink, and that I must treat them. Accordingly I jumped down from the rostrum, and led the

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like many other good stories about the Yankees, is no doubt a fiction: and was only intended to perpetuate the dislike of the New Englanders, who nevertheless excel all the settlers in industry, education, civility, and morality." (William Newnham Blane, "An excursion through the United States and Canada, during the years 1822-1823," *Pictures of Illinois One Hundred Years Ago*, edited by Milo Milton Quaife, p. 63. The Lakeside Classics. Chicago: R. R. Donnelly & Sons Company, the Lakeside Press. 1918.)

Counterfeit coonskin currency made by tying coon tails to possum skins is the subject of an anecdote related by Mrs. Anne Royall in *Letters from Alabama* (Washington, 1830), pp. 21-23, and cited in *The Beginnings of American English*, by M. M. Mathews, p. 93.

way to the shantee, followed by my constituents, shouting, "Huzza for Crockett!" and "Crockett forever!"

When we entered the shantee Job was busy dealing out his rum in a style that showed he was making a good day's work of it, and I called for a quart of the best; but the crooked crittur returned no other answer than by pointing to a board over the bar, on which he had chalked in large letters, *"Pay to-day and trust to-morrow."* Now that idea brought me up all standing; it was a sort of cornering in which there was no back-out, for ready money in the West, in those times, was the shyest thing in all natur, and it was most particularly shy with me on that occasion.

The voters, seeing my predicament, fell off to the other side, and I was left deserted and alone, as the Government will be, when he no longer has any offices to bestow. I saw as plain as day that the tide of popular opinion was against me, and that unless I got some rum speedily I should lose my election as sure as there are snakes in Virginny; and it must be done soon, or even burnt brandy wouldn't save me. So I walked away from the shantee, but in another guess sort from the way I entered it, for on this occasion I had no train after me, and not a voice shouted, "Huzza for Crockett!" Popularity sometimes depends on a very small matter indeed; in this particular it was worth a quart of New England rum, and no more.

Well, knowing that a crisis was at hand, I struck into the woods, with my rifle on my shoulder, my best friend in time of need; and, as good fortune would have it, I had not been out more than a quarter of an hour before I treed a fat coon, and in the pulling of a trigger he lay dead at the foot of the tree. I soon whipped his hairy jacket off his back, and again bent my steps towards the shantee, and walked up to the bar, but not alone, for this time I had half a dozen of my constituents at my heels. I threw down the coon-skin upon the counter, and called for a quart, and Job, though busy dealing out rum, forgot to point at his chalked rules and regulations; for he knew that a coon was as good a legal tender for a quart in the West as a New York shilling any day in the year.

My constituents now flocked about me, and cried, "Huzza for Crockett!" "Crockett forever!" and finding the tide had taken a turn, I told them several yarns to get them in a good humor; and having soon dispatched the value of the coon, I went out and mounted the stump without opposition, and a clear majority of the voters followed me to hear what I had .to offer for the good of the nation. Before I was half through one of my constituents moved that they would hear the balance of my speech after they had washed down the first part with some more of Job Snelling's extract of cornstalk and molasses, and the question being put, it was carried unanimously. It wasn't considered necessary to tell the yeas and nays, so we adjourned to the shantee, and on the way I began to reckon that the fate of the nation pretty much depended upon my shooting another coon.

While standing at the bar, feeling sort of bashful while Job's rules and regulations stared me in the face, I cast down my eyes, and discovered one end of the coon-skin sticking between the logs that supported the bar. Job had slung it there in the hurry of business. I gave it a sort of quick jerk, and it followed my hand as natural as if I had been the rightful owner. I slapped it on the counter, and Job, little dreaming that he was barking up the wrong tree, shoved along another bottle, which my constituents quickly disposed of with great good humor, for some of them saw the trick; and then we withdrew to the rostrum to discuss the affairs of the nation.

I don't know how it was, but the voters soon became dry again, and nothing would do but we must adjourn to the shantee; and as luck would have it, the coon-skin was still sticking between the logs, as if Job had flung it there on purpose to tempt me. I was not slow in raising it to the counter, the rum followed, of course, and I wish I may be shot if I didn't, before the day was over, get ten quarts for the same identical skin, and from a fellow, too, who in those parts was considered as sharp as a steel trap and as bright as a pewter button.

This joke secured me my election, for it soon circulated like smoke among my constituents, and they allowed, with one accord, that the man who could get the whip hand of Job Snelling in fair trade, could outwit Old Nick himself, and was the real grit for them in Congress. Job was by no means popular; he boasted of always being wide awake, and that any one who could take him in was free to do so, for he came from a stock that, sleeping or waking, had always one eye open, and the other not more than half closed. The whole family were geniuses. His father was the inventor of wooden nutmegs, by which Job said he might have made a fortune, if he had only taken out a patent and kept the business in his own hands; his mother, Patience, manufactured the first white oak pumpkin seeds of the mammoth kind, and turned a pretty penny the first season; and his aunt Prudence was the first to discover that corn husks, steeped into tobacco water, would make as handsome Spanish wrappers as ever came from Havana, and that oak leaves would answer all the purpose of filling, for no one could discover the difference except the man who smoked them, and then it would be too late to make a stir about it. Job himself bragged of having made some useful discoveries, the most profitable of which was the art of converting mahogany sawdust into cayenne pepper, which he said was a profitable and safe business; for the people have been so long accustomed to having dust thrown in their eyes that there wasn't much danger of being found out.

The way I got to the blind side of the Yankee merchant was pretty generally known before election day, and the result was that my opponent might as well have whistled jigs to a milestone as attempt to beat up for votes in that district. I beat him out and out, quite back into the old

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year, and there was scarce enough left of him, after the canvass was over, to make a small grease spot. He disappeared without even leaving a mark behind; and such will be the fate of Adam Huntsman, if there is a fair fight and no gouging.

After the election was over, I sent Snelling the price of the rum, but took good care to keep the fact from the knowledge of my constituents. Job refused the money, and sent me word that it did him good to be taken in occasionally, as it served to brighten his ideas; but I afterwards learnt when he found out the trick that had been played upon him, he put all the rum I had ordered in his bill against my opponent, who, being elated with the speeches he had made on the affairs of the nation, could not descend to examine into the particulars of a bill of a vender of rum in the small way.

## A SENSIBLE VARMINT

Almost every boddy that knows the forrest, understands parfectly well that Davy Crockett never loses powder and ball, havin' ben brort up to blieve it a sin to throw away amminition, and that is the bennefit of a vartuous eddikation. I war out in the forrest won arternoon, and had jist got to a plaice called the grate gap, when I seed a rakkoon setting all alone upon a tree. I klapped the breech of Brown Betty to my sholder, and war jist a going to put a piece of led between his sholders, when he lifted one paw, and sez he, "Is your name Crockett?"

Sez I, "You are rite for wonst, my name is Davy Crockett."

"Then," sez he, "you needn't take no further trubble, for I may as well cum down without another word"; and the cretur wauked rite down from the tree, for he considered himself shot.

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From "Mince Pie for the Million," Philadelphia and New York: Turner & Fisher, 1846.

I stoops down and pats him on the head, and sez I, "I hope I may be shot myself before I hurt a hare of your head, for I never had sich a kompliment in my life."

"Seeing as how you say that," sez he, "I'll jist walk off for the present, not doubting your word a bit, d'ye see, but lest you should kinder happen to change your mind."

## CROCKETT'S MORNING HUNT

One January morning it was so all-screwen-up cold that the forest trees war so stiff that they couldn't shake, and the very day-break froze fast as it war tryin' to dawn. The tinder-box in my cabin would no more ketch fire than a sunk raft at the bottom o' the sea. Seein' that daylight war so far behind time, I thought creation war in a fair way for freezin' fast.

"So," thinks I, "I must strike a leetle fire from my fingers, light my pipe, travel out a few leagues, and see about it."

Then I brought my knuckles together like two thunder clouds, but the sparks froze up afore I could begin to collect 'em—so out I walked, and endeavored to keep myself unfriz by goin' at a hop, step and jump gait, and whistlin' the tune of "fire in the mountains!" as I went along in three double quick time. Well, arter I had walked about twenty-five miles up the peak o' Daybreak Hill, I soon discovered what war the matter. The airth had actually friz fast in her axis, and couldn't turn round; the sun had got jammed between two cakes o' ice under the wheels, an' thar he had bin shinin' and workin' to get loose, till he friz fast in his cold sweat.

"C-r-e-a-t-i-o-n!" thought I, "this are the toughest sort o' suspension, and it mustn't be endured—somethin' must be done, or human creation is done for."

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From *Davy Crockett, American Comic Legend*, selected and edited by Richard M. Dorson, pp. 16-17. Copyright, 1939, by Rockland Editions. New York. Reprinted from the 1854 Crockett Almanac (New York, Cozans).

It war then so antedeluvian and premature cold that upper and lower teeth an' tongue war all collapsed together as tight as a friz oyster. I took a fresh twenty pound bear off o' my back that I'd picked up on the road, an' beat the animal agin the ice till the hot ile began to walk out on him at all sides. I then took an' held him over the airth's axes, an' squeezed him till I thaw'd 'em loose, poured about a ton on it over the sun's face, give the airth's cog-wheel one kick backward, till I got the sun loose—whistled "Push along, keep movin'!" an' in about fifteen seconds the airth gin a grunt, and begun movin'—the sun walked up beautiful, salutin' me with sich a wind o' gratitude that it made me sneeze. I lit my pipe by the blaze o' his top-knot, shouldered my bear, an' walked home, introducin' the people to fresh daylight with a piece of sunrise in my pocket, with which I cooked my bear steaks, an' enjoyed one o' the best breakfasts I had tasted for some time. If I didn't, jist wake some mornin' and go with me to the office o' sunrise!

## Mike Fink: Last of the Boatmen

Just previous to the beginning of the present century, after the settlements had become more dense on the Monongahela and on the Ohio, a new class sprung up in the West whose life was unique. This was the class of *boatmen*. These were a hardy, fearless set of men, who always kept just in advance of civilization and luxury. Many of them, at first, had been engaged in the border wars with the Indians, were bred from infancy amid dangers and experienced in all the practices and arts in the life of a woodsman.

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"The Western Boatmen." From *The Great West:* Containing Narratives of the Most Important and Interesting Events in Western History—Remarkable Individual Adventures—Sketches of Frontier Life—Descriptions of Natural Curiosities; To Which Is Appended Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Oregon, New Mexico, Texas, Minnesota, Utah, California, Washington, Nebraska, Kansas, Etc., Etc., Etc., by Henry Howe, pp. 275-280. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by Henry Howe, in the Clerk's office of the District

The boatmen were courageous, athletic, persevering, and patient of privations. They traversed in their pirogues, barges, or keels the longest rivers, penetrated the most remote wilderness upon their watery routes, and kept up a trade and intercourse between the most distant points. Accustomed to every species of exposure and privation, they despised ease and luxury. Clothed in the costume of the wilderness, and armed in western style, they were always ready to exchange the labors of the oar for offensive or defensive war. Exposed to the double force of the direct and reflected rays of the sun upon the water, their complexion was swarthy, and often but little fairer than the Indians. Often from an exposure of their bodies without shirts, their complexion from the head to the waist was the same.

Their toils, dangers, and exposures, and moving accidents of their long and perilous voyages were measurably hidden from the inhabitants who contemplated the boats floating by their dwellings on beautiful spring mornings, when the verdant forest, the mild and delicious temperature of the air, the delightful azure sky, the fine bottom on the one hand, and the rolling bluff on the other, the broad smooth stream rolling calmly down the forest, and floating the boat gently forward, present delightful images to the beholders. At such times there was no visible danger, or call for labor. The boat took care of itself; and little would the beholders imagine how different a scene might have been presented in half an hour. Meantime one of the hands scraped a violin and others danced. Greetings, or rude defiances, or trials of art, or proffers of love to the girls on shore, or saucy messages were scattered between them and the spectators along the banks. The boat glided on until it disappeared behind

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Court of the United States, for the Southern District of Ohio. New York: Published by George F. Tuttle. Cincinnati: Published by Henry Howe. 1857.

Cf. "Death of Mike Fink," by J. M. Field, *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 47-50.

a point of wood. At that moment, perhaps, the bugle with which all boats were provided struck up its notes in the distance, over the water. Those scenes and those notes, echoing from the bluffs of the beautiful Ohio, had a charm for the imagination which, although heard a thousand times, at all hours, and in all positions, presented to even the most unromantic spectator the image of a tempting and charming youthful existence, that almost inspired in his breast the wish that he too were a boatman.

No wonder that the young, who were reared in the then remote regions of the West, on the banks of the great stream, with that restless curiosity which is fostered by solitude and silence, looked upon the severe and unremitting labor of agriculture as irksome and tasteless compared to such a life, and that they embraced every opportunity, either openly or covertly, to devote themselves to an employment which seemed full of romance to their youthful visions.

Steam had not exerted its magic influence on the western waters, and the rich cargoes which ascended the Mississippi in keelboats and barges were propelled by human labor for nearly two thousand miles, slowly advancing against the strong current of these rivers. The boatmen, with their bodies naked to the waist, spent the long and tedious days traversing the "running board," and pushing with their whole force against their strong setting-poles firmly fixed against their shoulder. Thus, with their heads suspended nearly to the track on the running-board, they propelled their freighted barge up the long and tedious route of the river. After a hard day's toil, at night they took their "fillee," or ration of whisky, swallowed their homely supper of meat half burned and bread half baked, and retiring to sleep, they stretched themselves upon the deck, without covering, under the open canopy of heaven, or probably enveloped in a blanket, until the steersman's horn called them to their morning "fillee" and their toil.

Hard and fatiguing was the life of a boatman; yet it was rare that any of them ever changed his vocation. There was a charm in the excesses, in the frolics, and in the fightings which they anticipated at the end of the voyage, which cheered them on. Of weariness none would complain; but rising from his hard bed by the first dawn of day, and reanimated by his morning draught, he was prepared to hear and obey the wonted order, "Stand to your poles and set off!" The boatmen were masters of the windinghorn and the fiddle, and as the boat moved off from her moorings, some, to cheer their labors, or to "scare off the devil and secure good luck," would wind the animating blast of the horn, which, mingling with the sweet music of the fiddle, and reverberating along the sounding shores, greeted the solitary dwellers on the banks with news from New Orleans.

Their athletic labors gave strength incredible to their muscles, which they were vain to exhibit, and fist-fighting was their pastime. He who could boast that he had never been whipped was bound to fight whoever disputed his manhood. Keelboatmen and bargemen looked upon raftsmen and flatboatmen as their natural enemies, and a meeting was the prelude to a "battle-royal." They were great sticklers for "fair play," and whosoever was worsted in battle must abide the issue without assistance.

Their arrival in port was a general jubilee, where hundreds often met together for diversion and frolic. Their assemblages were often riotous and lawless to extremes, when the civil authorities were defied for days together. Had their numbers increased with the population of the West, they would have endangered the peace of the country; but the first steamboat that ascended the Ohio sounded their death-knell, and they have been buried in the tide, never more to rise.

Mike Fink, usually called "the last of the boatmen," was a fair specimen of his race. Many curious anecdotes are related of him. He was born in Pittsburgh. In early youth, his desire to become a boatman was a ruling passion which soon had its gratification. He served on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers as a boatman, until thrown out of employment by the general use of steamboats. When the Ohio was too low for navigation, he spent most of his time at shooting matches in the neighborhood of Pittsburgh, and soon became famous as the best shot in the country. On that account he was frequently called *bang all,* and hence, frequently excluded from participating in matches for beef; for which exclusion he claimed and obtained for his forbearance the *fifth quarter* of beef, as the hide and tallow are called. His usual practice was to sell his fifth quarter to the tavern keeper for whisky, with which he treated everybody present, partaking largely himself. He became fond of strong drink, and could partake of a gallon in twenty-four hours without the effect being perceivable.

Mike's weight was about one hundred and eighty pounds; height about five feet nine inches; countenance open; skin tanned by sun and rain; form broad and very muscular, and of Herculean strength and great activity. His language was of the half horse and half alligator dialect of the then race of boatmen. He was also a wit, and on that account he gained the admiration and excited the fears of all the fraternity; for he usually enforced his wit with a sound drubbing, if any one dared to *dissent* by neglecting or refusing to laugh at his jokes; for, as he used to say, he cracked his jokes on purpose to be laughed at in a good-humored way, and that no man should make light of them. As a consequence, Mike had always around him a chosen band of laughing philosophers. An eye bunged up, or a dilapidated nose or ear, was sure to win Mike's sympathy and favor, for he made proclamation: "I'm a Salt River Roarer! I'm chuck full of fight, and I love the wimin," etc.; and he did, for he had a sweetheart in every port. Among his chosen worshippers, who would fight their death for him, as they termed it, were Carpenter and Talbot. Each was a match for the other in prowess, in fight, or skill in shooting, having each been under Mike's diligent training.

Mike, at one time, had a woman who passed for his wife; whether she was truly so, we do not know. But at any rate, the following anecdote is a rare instance of conjugal discipline.

Some time in the latter part of autumn, a few years after the close of the late war with Great Britain, several keelboats landed for the night near the mouth of the Muskingum, among which was that of Mike. After making all fast, Mike was observed, just under the bank, scraping into a heap the dried beech leaves, which had been blown there during the day, having just fallen from the effects of the early autumn frosts. To all questions as to what he was doing he returned no answer, but continued at his work until he had piled them up as high as his head. He then separated them, making a sort of an oblong ring, in which he lay down, as if to ascertain whether it was a good bed or not. Getting up, he sauntered on board, hunted up his rifle, made great preparations about his priming, and then called in a very impressive manner upon his wife to follow him. Both proceeded up to the pile of leaves, poor *"Peg"* in a terrible flutter as she had discovered that Mike was in no very amiable humor.

"Get in there and lie down," was the command to Peg, topped off with one of Mike's very choicest oaths. "Now, *Mr.* Fink,"— she always mistered him when his blood was up—"what have I done? I don't know, I'm sure—"

"Get in there and lie down, or I'll shoot you," with another oath, and drawing up his rifle to his shoulder. Poor Peg obeyed, and crawled into the leaf pile, and Mike covered her up with the combustibles. He then took a flour barrel and split the staves into fine pieces, and lighted them at the fire on board the boat, all the time watching the leaf pile, and swearing he would shoot Peg if she moved. So soon as his splinters began to blaze he took them into his hand and deliberately set fire, in four different places, to the leaves that surrounded his wife. In an instant the whole mass was on fire, aided by a fresh wind which was blowing at the time, while Mike was quietly standing by enjoying the fun. Peg, through fear of Mike, stood it as long as she could; but it soon became too hot, and she made a run for the river, her hair and clothing all on fire. In a few seconds she reached the water and plunged in, rejoiced to know she had escaped both fire and rifle so well. "There," said Mike, "that'll larn you not to be winkin' at them fellers on t'other boat."

Mike first visited St. Louis as a keelboatman, in 1814 or '15. Among his shooting feats the following are related by eye witnesses. In ascending the Mississippi above the Ohio, he saw a sow with a couple of pigs, about one hundred feet distant on the river bank. He declared, in boatman phrase, he wanted a pig, and took up his rifle to shoot one, but was requested not to do so. He, however, laid his rifle to his face, and as the boat glided along under easy sail, he successively shot off the tail of each of them close to the rump, without doing them any other harm. Being, on one occasion, in his boat at the St. Louis landing, he saw a Negro standing on the river bank, gazing in wonder at the show about him. Mike took up his rifle and shot off the poor fellow's heel. He fell badly wounded and crying *murder*. Mike was arrested and tried in the county court, and found guilty by a jury. His justification of the offense was that the fellow's heel projected too far behind, preventing him from wearing a *genteel boot*, and he wished to correct the defect. His particular friend, Carpenter, was also a great shot. Carpenter and Mike used to fill a tin cup with whisky, and place it by turns on each others' heads, and shoot at it with a rifle at the distance of seventy yards. It was always bored through without injury to the one on whose head it was placed. This feat is too well authenticated to admit of question. It was often performed, and they liked the feat the better because it showed their confidence in each other.

In 1822, Mike and his two friends, Carpenter and Talbot, engaged in St. Louis with Henry and Ashley to go up the Missouri with them in the threefold capacity of boatmen, trappers, and hunters. The first year, a company of about sixty ascended as high as the mouth of Yellow Stone River, where they built a fort for the purposes of trade and security. From this place, small detachments of men, ten or twelve in a company, were sent out to hunt and trap on the tributary streams of the Missouri and the Yellow Stone. When winter set in, Mike and his company returned to a place near the mouth of the Yellow Stone, and preferring to remain out of the fort, they dug a hole or cave in the bluff bank of the river, in which they resided during the winter, which proved a warm and commodious habitation, protecting them from the winds and the snows. Here Mike and his friend Carpenter had a deadly quarrel, supposed to have been caused by a rivalry in the good graces of a squaw. It was for awhile smothered by the interposition of friends.

On the return of spring, the party revisited the fort, where Mike and Carpenter, over a cup of whisky, revived the recollection of their past quarrel, but made a treaty of peace which was to be solemnized by their usual trial of shooting the cup of whisky off each other's head. To determine who should have the first shot, Mike proposed that they should "sky [toss up] a copper," which was done and resulted in Mike's favor. Carpenter seemed to be aware of Mike's unforgiving treacherous disposition, but scorning to save his life by refusing to fulfill his contract, he prepared for death, and bequeathed his gun, shot-pouch, powder-horn, belt, pistols, and wages to Talbot. Without changing a feature, Carpenter filled the cup with whisky to the brim. Mike loaded, picked the flint, and leveled his rifle at the head of Carpenter, at the distance of sixty yards. After drawing the bead, he took down his rifle from his face, and smilingly said:

"Hold your noddle steady, Carpenter! Don't spill the whisky; I shall want some presently."

He again raised, cocked his piece, and in an instant Carpenter fell, and expired without a groan. Mike's ball had penetrated precisely through the center of his forehead. He coolly set down his rifle, and applying the muzzle to his mouth, blew the smoke out of the touch-hole, without saying a word, keeping his eye steadily on the fallen body of Carpenter. His first words were:

"Carpenter! have you spilt the whisky?" He was then told he had killed him. "It is all an accident!" rejoined Mike, "for I took as fair a *bead* on the black spot on the cup, as ever I took on a squirrel's eye. How did it happen?" He then cursed the gun, the powder, the bullet, and finally, himself.

This catastrophe, in a country where the strong arm of the law could not reach, passed off for an accident. Talbot determined to revenge the death of his friend. No opportunity offered for some months after, until one day Mike, in a fit of gasconading, declared that he had purposely killed Carpenter, and was glad of it. Talbot instantly drew from his belt a pistol, bequeathed by Carpenter, and shot Mike through the heart; he fell, and expired without a word. Talbot also went unpunished, as nobody had authority or inclination to call him to account. In truth, he was as ferocious and dangerous as the grizzly bear of the prairies, and soon after perished in attempting to swim a river.

## Crockett's and Fink's Brags

I'm that same David Crockett, fresh from the backwoods, half-horse, half-alligator, a little touched with the snapping turtle; can wade the Mississippi, leap the Ohio, ride upon a streak of lightning, and slip without a scratch down a honey locust; can whip my weight in wild cats—and if any gentleman pleases, for a ten dollar bill, he may throw in a panther, —hug a bear too close for comfort, and eat any man opposed to Jackson.[1]

I'm a Salt River roarer! I'm a ring-tailed squealer! I'm a reg'lar screamer from the ol' Massassip'! WHOOP! I'm the very infant that refused his milk before its eyes were open, and called out for a bottle of old Rye! I love the women an' I'm chockful o' fight! I'm half wild horse and half cock-eyed alligator and the rest o' me is crooked snags an' red-hot snappin' turkle. I can hit like fourth-proof lightnin' an' every lick I make in the woods lets in an acre o' sunshine. I can out-run, out-jump, out-shoot, out-brag, out-drink, an' out-fight, rough-an'-tumble, no holts barred, ary man on both sides the river from Pittsburgh to New Orleans an' back ag'in to St. Louiee. Come on, you flatters, you bargers, you milk-white mechanics, an' see how tough I am to chaw! I ain't had a fight for two days an' I'm spilein' for exercise. Cock-a-doodle-do![2]

## "Change the Name of Arkansas? Hell, No!"

### I

Mr. Speaker, You blue-bellied rascal! I have for the last thirty minutes been trying to get your attention, and each time I have caught your eye, you have wormed, twisted and squirmed like a dog with a flea in his hide, damn you!

Gentlemen, you may tear down the honored pictures from the halls of the United States Senate, desecrate the grave of George Washington, haul down the Stars and Stripes, curse the Goddess of Liberty, and knock down the tomb of U. S. Grant, but your crime would in no wise compare in enormity with what you propose to do when you would change the name of Arkansas! Change the name of Arkansas—hell-fire, no!

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[1] From *Sketches and Eccentricities of Col. David Crockett, of West Tennessee*, p. 164. New York: Printed and Published by J. & J. Harper. 1833.

[2] From *Mike Fink, King of Mississippi Keelboatmen*, by Walter Blair and Franklin J. Meine, pp. 105-106. Copyright, 1933, by Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York.

From *Folklore of Romantic Arkansas*, by Fred W. Allsopp, Volume II, pp. 87-90. Copyright, 1931, by the Grolier Society.

Compare the lily of the valley to the gorgeous sunrise; the discordant croak of the bull-frog to the melodious tones of a nightingale; the classic strains of Mozart to the bray of a Mexican mule; the puny arm of a Peruvian prince to the muscles of a Roman gladiator—but never change the name of Arkansas. Hell, no![1]

## II

The member arose, shook his head, looked fierce, rolled up his sleeves, pounded the table, and saying, "Hear me, gentlemen," waded in:

Mr. Speaker: The man who would CHANGE THE NAME OF ARKANSAS is the original iron-jawed, brass-mounted, copper-bellied corpse-maker from the wilds of the Ozarks! Sired by a hurricane, dammed by an earthquake, half-brother to the cholera, nearly related to the small-pox on his mother's side, he is the man they call Sudden Death and General Desolation! Look at him! He takes nineteen alligators and a barrel of whisky for breakfast, when he is in robust health; and a bushel of rattlesnakes and a dead body when he is ailing. He splits the everlasting rocks with his glance, and quenches the thunder when he speaks!

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[1] There is a tradition that away back yonder—about the time when the Arkansas Traveler story came into being—it was proposed to change the name of Arkansas by legislative enactment. Some say the question was actually introduced at a session of the Legislature, and that a member delivered a fiery speech on the subject. "Change the name of Arkansas? Hell, No!" he is supposed to have declared. The writer has been requested many times for a copy of that speech. Investigation fails to reveal any official record of such a deliverance, but it seems certain that there was some discussion of the matter, in or out of the halls of state, and the speech may have been delivered sub rosa at a committee meeting, or, more likely, in a bar-room. It has frequently been referred to at banquets and on other convivial occasions, always being described as a wickedly lurid gem. As often rehearsed by George Williams, a member of the Arkansas Legislature from Pulaski County, some 25 years ago, it went something like this, barring its unprintable profanity and obscenity.—F. W. A.

Change the name of Arkansas! Hell, no! Stand back and give him room according to his strength. Blood's his natural drink! And the wails of the dying is music to his ears! Cast your eyes on the gentleman, and lay low and hold your breath, for he's 'bout to turn himself loose! He's the bloodiest son of a wild-cat that lives, who would change the name of Arkansas! Hold him down to earth, for he is a child of sin! Don't attempt to look at him with your naked eye, gentlemen; use smoked glass. The man who would change the name of Arkansaw, by gosh, would use the meridians of longitude and the parallels of latitude for a seine, and drag the Atlantic ocean for whales! He would scratch himself awake with the lightning, and purr himself asleep with the thunder! When he's cold, he would "bile" the Gulf of Mexico and bathe in it! When he's hot, he would fan himself with an equinoctial storm! When he's thirsty, he would reach up and suck a cloud dry like a sponge! When he's hungry, famine follows in his wake! You may put your hand on the sun's face, and make it night on the earth; bite a piece out of the moon, and hurry the seasons; shake yourself and rumble the mountains; but, sir, you will never change the name of Arkansaw!

The man who would change the name of Arkansaw, would massacre isolated communities as a pastime. He would destroy nationalities as a serious business! He would use the boundless vastness of the Great American Desert for his private grave-yard! He would attempt to extract sunshine from cucumbers! Hide the stars in a nail-keg, put the sky to soak in a gourd, hang the Arkansas River on a clothesline; unbuckle the belly-band of Time, and turn the sun and moon out to pasture; but you will never change the name of Arkansaw! The world will again pause and wonder at the audacity of the lop-eared, lantern-jawed, half-breed, half-born, whisky-soaked hyena who has proposed to change the name of Arkansaw! He's just starting to climb the political banister, and wants to knock the hay-seed out of his hair, pull the splinters out of his feet, and push on and up to the governorship. *But change the name of Arkansaw, hell, no!*[1]

## Wild Bill Hickok

### MY FIRST MEETING WITH WILD BILL

Several months after the ending of the civil war I visited the city of Springfield in Southwest Missouri. Springfield is not a burgh of extensive dimensions, yet it is the largest in that part of the State, and all roads lead to it—which is one reason why it was the *point d'appui,* as well as the base of operations for all military movements during the war.

On a warm summer day I sat watching from the shadow of a broad awning the coming and going of the strange, half-civilized people who, from all the country round, make this a place for barter and trade. Men and women dressed in queer costumes; men with coats and trowsers made of skin, but so thickly covered with dirt and grease as to have defied the identity of the animal when walking in the flesh. Others wore homespun gear, which oftentimes appeared to have seen lengthy service. Many of those people were mounted on horse-back or mule-back, while others urged forward the unwilling cattle attached to creaking, heavily-laden wagons, their drivers snapping their long whips with a report like that of a pistol-shot.

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From "Wild Bill" [by George Ward Nichols], *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* Vol. XXXIV (February, 1867), No. CCI, pp. 273-285.

[1] Here is another version of what is supposed to have been the speech, delivered by Cassius M. Johnson, as printed in a pamphlet at Cleveland, Ohio. Printed by J. H. Philips, Cleveland, Ohio, no date.—F. W. A.

In front of the shops which lined both sides of the main business street, and about the public square, were groups of men lolling against posts, lying upon the wooden sidewalks, or sitting in chairs. These men were temporary or permanent denizens of the city, and were lazily occupied in doing nothing. The most marked characteristic of the inhabitants seemed to be an indisposition to move, and their highest ambition to let their hair and beards grow.

Here and there upon the street the appearance of the army blue betokened the presence of a returned Union soldier, and the jaunty, confident air with which they carried themselves was all the more striking in its contrast with the indolence which appeared to belong to the place. The only indication of action was the inevitable revolver which everybody, excepting, perhaps, the women, wore about their persons. When people moved in this lazy city they did so slowly and without method. No one seemed in haste. A huge hog wallowed in luxurious ease in a nice bed of mud on the other side of the way, giving vent to gentle grunts of satisfaction. On the platform at my feet lay a large wolf-dog literally asleep with one eye open. He, too, seemed contented to let the world wag idly on.

The loose, lazy spirit of the occasion finally took possession of me, and I sat and gazed and smoked, and it is possible that I might have fallen into a Rip Van Winkle sleep to have been aroused ten years hence by the cry, "Passengers for the flying machine to New York, all aboard!" when I and the drowsing city were roused into life by the clatter and crash of the hoofs of a horse which dashed furiously across the square and down the street. The rider sat perfectly erect, yet following with a grace of motion, seen only in the horsemen of the plains, the rise and fall of the galloping steed. There was only a moment to observe this, for they halted suddenly, while the rider springing to the ground approached the party which the noise had gathered near me.

"This yere is Wild Bill, Colonel," said Captain Honesty, an army officer, addressing me. He continued:

"How are yer, Bill? This yere is Colonel N——, who wants ter know yer."

Let me at once describe the personal appearance of the famous Scout of the Plains, William Hitchcock [*sic*], called "Wild Bill," who now advanced toward me, fixing his clear gray eyes on mine in a quick, interrogative way, as if to take "my measure."

The result seemed favorable, for he held forth a small, muscular hand in a frank, open manner. As I looked at him I thought his the handsomest *physique* I had ever seen. In its exquisite manly proportions it recalled the antique. It was a figure Ward would delight to model as a companion to his "Indian."

Bill stood six feet and an inch in his bright yellow moccasins. A deerskin shirt, or frock it might be called, hung jauntily over his shoulders, and revealed a chest whose breadth and depth were remarkable. These lungs had had growth in some twenty years of the free air of the Rocky Mountains. His small, round waist was girthed by a belt which held two of Colt's navy revolvers. His legs sloped gradually from the compact thigh to the feet, which were small, and turned inward as he walked. There was a singular grace and dignity of carriage about that figure which would have called your attention meet it where you would. The head which crowned it was now covered by a large sombrero, underneath which there shone out a quiet, manly face; so gentle is its expression as he greets you as utterly to belie the history of its owner, yet it is not a face to be trifled with. The lips thin and sensitive, the jaw not too square, the cheek bones slightly prominent, a mass of fine dark hair falls below the neck to the shoulders. The eyes, now that you are in friendly intercourse, are as gentle as a woman's. In truth, the woman nature seems prominent throughout, and you would not believe that you were looking into eyes that have pointed the way to death to hundreds of men. Yes, Wild Bill with his own hands has killed hundreds of men. Of that I have not a doubt. "He shoots to kill," as they say on the border.

In vain did I examine the scout's face for some evidence of murderous propensity. It was a gentle face, and singular only in the sharp angle of the eye, and without any physiognomical reason for the opinion, I have thought his wonderful accuracy of aim was indicated by this peculiarity. He told me, however, to use his own words:

"I allers shoot well; but I come ter be perfeck in the mountains by shootin at a dime for a mark, at bets of half a dollar a shot. And then until the war I never drank liquor nor smoked," he continued, with a melancholy expression; "war is demoralizing, it is."

Captain Honesty was right. I was very curious to see "Wild Bill, the Scout," who, a few days before my arrival in Springfield, in a duel at noonday in the public square, at fifty paces, had sent one of Colt's pistol-balls through the heart of a returned Confederate soldier.

Whenever I had met an officer or soldier who had served in the Southwest I heard of Wild Bill and his exploits, until these stories became so frequent and of such an extraordinary character as quite to outstrip personal knowledge of adventure by camp and field; and the hero of those strange tales took shape in my mind as did Jack the Giant Killer or Sinbad the Sailor in childhood days. As then, I now had the most implicit faith in the existence of the individual; but how one man could accomplish such prodigies of strength and feats of daring was a continued wonder.

## THE DUEL WITH DAVE TUTT

Bill was born of Northern parents in the State of Illinois. He ran away from home when a boy, and wandered out

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*Ibid.*

upon the plains and into the mountains. For fifteen years he lived with the trappers, hunting and fishing. When the war broke out he returned to the States and entered the Union service. No man probably was ever better fitted for scouting than he. Joined to his tremendous strength he was an unequalled horseman; he was a perfect marksman; he had a keen sight, and a constitution which had no limit of endurance. He was cool to audacity, brave to rashness, always possessed of himself under the most critical circumstances; and, above all, was such a master in the knowledge of woodcraft that it might have been termed a science with him—a knowledge which, with the soldier, is priceless beyond description . . . .

The main features of the story of the duel was [*sic*] told me by Captain Honesty, who was unprejudiced, if it is possible to find an unbiased mind in a town of 3000 people after a fight has taken place. I will give the story in his words:

"They say Bill's wild. Now he isn't any sich thing. I've known him goin on ter ten year, and he's as civil a disposed person as you'll find he-e-arabouts. But he won't be put upon.

"I'll tell yer how it happened. But come inter the office; thar's a good many round hy'ar as sides with Tutt—the man that's shot. But I tell yer 'twas a far fight. Take some whisky? No! Well, I will, if yer'l excuse me.

"You see," continued the Captain, setting the empty glass on the table in an emphatic way, "Bill was up in his room a-playin seven-up, or four-hand, or some of them pesky games. Bill refused ter play with Tutt, who was a professional gambler. Yer see, Bill was a scout on our side durin the war, and Tutt was a reb scout. Bill had killed Dave Tutt's mate, and, atween one thing and another, there war an onusual hard feelin atwixt 'em.

"Ever sin Dave come back he had tried to pick a row with Bill; so Bill wouldn't play cards with him any more. But

Dave stood over the man who was gambling with Bill and lent the feller money. Bill won about two hundred dollars, which made Tutt spiteful mad. Bime-by, he says to Bill:

"'Bill, you've got plenty of money—pay me that forty dollars yer owe me in that horse trade.'

"And Bill paid him. Then he said:

"'Yer owe me thirty-five dollars more; yer lost it playing with me t'other night.'

"Dave's style was right provoking; but Bill answered him perfectly gentlemanly:

"'I think yer wrong, Dave. It's only twenty-five dollars. I have a memorandum of it in my pocket down stairs. Ef it's thirty-five dollars I'll give it yer.'

"Now Bill's watch was lying on the table. Dave took up the watch, put it in his pocket, and said: 'I'll keep this yere watch till yer pay me that thirty-five dollars.'

"This made Bill shooting mad; fur, don't yer see, Colonel, *it* was a-doubting his honor like, so he got up and looked Dave in the eyes, and said to him: 'I don't want ter make a row in this house. It's a decent house, and I don't want ter injure the keeper. You'd better put that watch back on the table.'

"But Dave grinned at Bill mighty ugly, and walked off with the watch, and kept it several days. All this time Dave's friends were spurring Bill on ter fight; there was no end ter the talk. They blackguarded him in an underhand sort of a way, and tried ter get up a scrimmage, and then they thought they could lay him out. Yer see Bill has enemies all about. He's settled the accounts of a heap of men who lived round here. This is about the only place in Missouri whar a reb can come back and live, and ter tell yer the truth, Colonel—" and the Captain, with an involuntary movement, hitched up his revolver-belt, as he said, with expressive significance, "they don't stay long round here!

"Well, as I was saying, these rebs don't like ter see a man walking round town who they knew in the reb army as one of their men, who they now know was on our side, all the time he was sending us information, sometimes from Pap Price's own head-quarters. But they couldn't provoke Bill inter a row, for he's afeard of hisself when he gits *awful* mad; and he allers left his shootin irons in his room when he went out. One day these cusses drew their pistols on him and dared him to fight, and then they told him that Tutt was a-goin ter pack that watch across the squar next day at noon.

"I heard of this, for every body was talking about it on the street, and so I went after Bill, and found him in his room, cleaning and greasing and loading his revolvers.

" 'Now, Bill,' says I, 'you're goin ter git inter a fight.'

" 'Don't you bother yerself, Captain,' says he. 'It's not the first time I have been in a fight; and these d——d hounds have put on me long enough. You don't want me ter give up my honor, do yer?'

" 'No, Bill,' says I, 'yer must keep yer honor.'

"Next day, about noon, Bill went down to the squar. He had said that Dave Tutt shouldn't pack that watch across the squar unless dead men could walk.

"When Bill got onter the squar he found a crowd standin in the corner of the street by which he entered the squar, which is from the south, yer know. In this crowd he saw a lot of Tutt's friends; some were cousins of his'n, just back from the reb army; and they jeered him, and boasted that Dave was a-goin to pack that watch across the squar as he promised.

"Then Bill saw Tutt standin near the courthouse, which yer remember is on the west side, so that the crowd war behind Bill.

"Just then Tutt, who war alone, started from the courthouse and walked out into the squar, and Bill moved away from the crowd toward the west side of the squar. Bout fifteen paces brought them opposite to each other, and about fifty yards apart. Tutt then showed his pistol. Bill had kept a sharp eye on him, and before Tutt could pint it Bill had his'n out.

"At that moment you could have heard a pin drop in that squar. Both Tutt and Bill fired, but one discharge followed the other so quick that it's hard to say which went off first. Tutt was a famous shot, but he missed this time; the ball from his pistol went over Bill's head. The instant Bill fired, without waitin ter see ef he had hit Tutt, he wheeled on his heels and pointed his pistol at Tutt's friends, who had already drawn their weepons.

" 'Aren't yer satisfied, gentlemen?' cried Bill, as cool as an alligator. 'Put up your shootin-irons, or there'll be more dead men here.' And they put 'em up, and said it war a far fight."

"What became of Tutt?" I asked of the Captain, who had stopped at this point of his story, and was very deliberately engaged in refilling his empty glass.

"Oh! Dave? He was as plucky a feller as ever drew trigger; but, Lord bless yer! it was no use. Bill never shoots twice at the same man, and his ball went through Dave's heart. He stood stock-still for a second or two, then raised his arm as if ter fire again, then he swayed a little, staggered three or four steps and then fell dead.

"Bill and his friends wanted ter have the thing done regular, so we went up ter the Justice, and Bill delivered himself up. A jury was drawn; Bill was tried and cleared the next day. It was proved that it was a case of self-defense. Don't yer see, Colonel?"

I answered that I was afraid that I did not see that point very clearly.

"Well, well!" he replied, with an air of compassion, "you haven't drunk any whisky, that's what's the matter with yer." And then, putting his hand on my shoulder with a half-mysterious, half-conscious look in his face, he muttered, in a whisper:

*"The fact is, thar was an undercurrent of a woman in that fight!"*

[The following conversation took place that afternoon at the hotel.—B. A. B.]

I had a curiosity, which was not an idle one, to hear what this man had to say about his duel with Tutt, and I asked him:

"Do you not regret killing Tutt? You surely do not like to kill men?"

"As ter killing men," he replied, "I never thought much about it. The most of the men I have killed it was one or t'other of us, and at sich times you don't stop to think; and what's the use after it's all over? As for Tutt, I had rather not have killed him, for I want ter settle down quiet here now. But thar's been hard feeling between us a long while. I wanted ter keep out of that fight; but he tried to degrade me, and I couldn't stand that, you know, for I am a fighting man, you know."

A cloud passed over the speaker's face for a moment as he continued:

"And there was a cause of quarrel between us which people round here don't know about. One of us had to die; and the secret died with him."

"Why did you not wait to see if your ball had hit him? Why did you turn round so quickly?"

The scout fixed his gray eyes on mine, striking his leg with his riding-whip, as he answered.

"I *knew* he was a dead man. I never miss a shot. I turned on the crowd because I was sure they would shoot me if they saw him fall."

"The people about here tell me you are a quiet, civil man. How is it you get into these fights?"

"D——d if I can tell," he replied, with a puzzled look which at once gave place to a proud, defiant expression as he continued—"but you know a man must defend his honor."

"Yes," I admitted, with some hesitation, remembering that I was not in Boston but on the border, and that the code of honor and mode of redress differ slightly in the one place from those of the other.

## THE McCANLES MASSACRE

. . . I was especially desirous to hear him relate the history of a sanguinary fight which he had with a party of ruffians in the early part of the war, when, singlehanded, he fought and killed ten men. I had heard the story as it came from an officer of the regular army who, an hour after the affair, saw Bill and the ten dead men—some killed with bullets, others hacked and slashed to death with a knife.

As I write out the details of this terrible tale from notes which I took as the words fell from the scout's lips, I am conscious of its extreme improbability; but while I listened to him I remembered the story in the Bible, where we are told that Samson "with the jawbone of an ass slew a thousand men," and as I looked upon this magnificent example of human strength and daring, he appeared to me to realize the powers of a Samson and Hercules combined, and I should not have been inclined to place any limit upon his achievements. Besides this, one who has lived for four years in the presence of such grand heroism and deeds of prowess as was seen during the war is in what might be called a "receptive" mood. Be the story true or not, in part, or in whole, I believed then every word Wild Bill uttered, and I believe it to-day.

"I don't like to talk about that M'Kandlas affair," said Bill, in answer to my question. "It gives me a queer shiver whenever I think of it, and sometimes I dream about it, and wake up in a cold sweat.

"You see this M'Kandlas was the captain of a gang of

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*Ibid.*

For "The Truth about the McCanles Affair," see *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 83-85.

desperadoes, horse-thieves, murderers, regular cut-throats, who were the terror of everybody on the border, and who kept us in the mountains in hot water whenever they were around. I knew them all in the mountains, where they pretended to be trapping, but they were there hiding from the hangman. M'Kandlas was the biggest scoundrel and bully of them all, and was allers a-braggin of what he could do. One day I beat him shootin at a mark, and then threw him at the back-holt. And I didn't drop him as soft as you would a baby, you may be sure. Well, he got savage mad about it, and swore he would have his revenge on me some time.

"This was just before the war broke out, and we were already takin sides in the mountains either for the South or the Union. M'Kandlas and his gang were border-ruffians in the Kansas row, and of course they went with the rebs. Bime-by he clar'd out, and I shouldn't have thought of the feller agin ef he hadn't crossed my path. It 'pears he didn't forget me.

"It was in '61, when I guided a detachment of cavalry who were comin in from Camp Floyd. We had nearly reached the Kansas line and were in South Nebraska, when one afternoon I went out of camp to go to the cabin of an old friend of mine, a Mrs. Waltman. I took only one of my revolvers with me, for although the war had broke out I didn't think it necessary to carry both my pistols, and, in all or'nary scrimmages, one is better than a dozen, ef you shoot straight. I saw some wild turkeys on the road as I was goin down, and popped one of 'em over, thinking he'd be just the thing for supper.

"Well, I rode up to Mrs. Waltman's, jumped off my horse, and went into the cabin, which is like most of the cabins on the prarer, with only one room, and that had two doors, one opening in front and t'other on a yard, like.

"'How are you, Mrs. Waltman?' I said, feeling as jolly as you please.

"The minute she saw me she turned as white as a sheet and screamed: 'Is that you, Bill? Oh, my God! They will kill you! Run! Run! They will kill you!'

"'Who's a-goin to kill me?' said I. 'There's two can play at that game.'

"'It's M'Kandlas and his gang. There's ten of them, and you've no chance. They've jes gone down the road to the corn-rack. They came up here only five minutes ago. M'Kandlas was draggin poor Parson Shipley on the ground with a lariat round his neck. The preacher was most dead with choking and the horses stamping on him. M'Kandlas knows yer bringin in that party of Yankee cavalry, and he swears he'll cut yer heart out. Run, Bill, run!—But it's too late; they're comin up the lane.'

"While she was a-talkin I remembered I had but one revolver, and a load gone out of that. On the table there was a horn of powder and some little bars of lead. I poured some powder into the empty chamber and rammed the lead after it by hammering the barrel on the table, and had just capped the pistol when I heard M'Kandlas shout:

"'There's that d——d Yank Wild Bill's horse; he's here; and we'll skin him alive!'

"If I had thought of runnin before, it war too late now, and the house was my best holt—a sort of fortress, like. I never thought I should leave that room alive."

The scout stopped in his story, rose from his seat, and strode back and forward in a state of great excitement.

"I tell you what it is, Kernel," he resumed, after a while, "I don't mind a scrimmage with these fellers round here. Shoot one or two of them and the rest run away. But all of M'Kandlas's gang were reckless, blood-thirsty devils, who would fight as long as they had strength to pull a trigger. I have been in tight places, but that's one of the few times I said my prayers.

"'Surround the house and give him no quarter!' yelled M'Kandlas. When I heard that I felt as quiet and cool as if

I was a-goin to church. I looked round the room and saw a Hawkins rifle hangin over the bed.

" 'Is that loaded?' said I to Mrs. Waltman.

" 'Yes,' the poor thing whispered. She was so frightened she couldn't speak out loud.

" 'Are you sure?' said I, as I jumped to the bed and caught it from its hooks. Although my eye did not leave the door, yet I could see she nodded 'Yes' again. I put the revolver on the bed, and just then M'Kandlas poked his head inside the doorway, but jumped back when he saw me with the rifle in my hand.

" 'Come in here, you cowardly dog!' I shouted. 'Come in here, and fight me!'

"M'Kandlas was no coward, if he was a bully. He jumped inside the room with his gun leveled to shoot; but he was not quick enough. My rifle-ball went through his heart. He fell back outside the house, where he was found afterward holding tight to his rifle, which had fallen over his head.

"His disappearance was followed by a yell from his gang, and then there was a dead silence. I put down the rifle and took the revolver, and I said to myself: 'Only six shots and nine men to kill. Save your powder, Bill, for the death-hug's a-comin!' I don't know why it was, Kernel," continued Bill, looking at me inquiringly, "but at that moment things seemed clear and sharp. I could think strong.

"There was a few seconds of that awful stillness, and then the ruffians came rushing in at both doors. How wild they looked with their red, drunken faces and inflamed eyes, shouting and cussing! But I never aimed more deliberately in my life.

"One—two—three—four; and four men fell dead.

"That didn't stop the rest. Two of them fired their bird-guns at me. And then I felt a sting run all over me. The room was full of smoke. Two got in close to me, their eyes glaring out of the clouds. One I knocked down with my fist. 'You are out of the way for a while,' I thought. The second I shot dead. The other three clutched me and crowded me onto the bed. I fought hard. I broke with my hand one man's arm. He had his fingers round my throat. Before I could get to my feet I was struck across the breast with the stock of a rifle, and I felt the blood rushing out of my nose and mouth. Then I got ugly, and I remember that I got hold of a knife, and then it was all cloudy like, and I was wild, and I struck savage blows, following the devils up from one side to the other of the room and into the corners, striking and slashing until I knew that every one was dead.

"All of a sudden it seemed as if my heart was on fire. I was bleeding every where. I rushed out to the well and drank from the bucket, and then tumbled down in a faint."

Breathless with the intense interest with which I had followed this strange story, all the more thrilling and weird when its hero, seeming to live over again the bloody events of that day, gave way to its terrible spirit with wild, savage gestures, I saw then—that my scrutiny of the morning had failed to discover—the tiger which lay concealed beneath that gentle exterior.

"You must have been hurt almost to death," I said.

"There were eleven buck-shot in me. I carry some of them now. I was cut in thirteen places. All of them bad enough to have let out the life of a man. But that blessed old Dr. Mills pulled me safe through it, after a bed siege of many a long week."

"That prayer of yours, Bill, may have been more potent for your safety than you think. You should thank God for your deliverance."

"To tell you the truth, Kernel," responded the scout with a certain solemnity in his grave face, "I don't talk about sich things ter the people round here, but I allers feel sort of thankful when I get out of a bad scrape."

"In all your wild, perilous adventures," I asked him, "have you ever been afraid? Do you know what the sensation is?

I am sure you will not misunderstand the question, for I take it we soldiers comprehend justly that there is no higher courage than that which shows itself when the consciousness of danger is keen but where moral strength overcomes the weakness of the body."

"I think I know what you mean, Sir, and I'm not ashamed to say that I have been so frightened that it 'peared as if all the strength and blood had gone out of my body, and my face was as white as chalk. It was at the Wilme Creek fight. I had fired more than fifty cartridges, and I think fetched my man every time. I was on the skirmish line, and was working up closer to the rebs, when all of a sudden a battery opened fire right in front of me, and it sounded as if forty thousand guns were firing, and every shot and shell screeched within six inches of my head. It was the first time I was ever under artillery fire, and I was so frightened that I couldn't move for a minute or so, and when I did go back, the boys asked me if I had seen a ghost. They may shoot bullets at me by the dozen, and it's rather exciting if I can shoot back, but I am always sort of nervous when the big guns go off."

"I would like to see you shoot."

"Would yer?" replied the scout, drawing his revolver; and approaching the window, he pointed to a letter O in a signboard which was fixed to the stone-wall of a building on the other side of the way.

"That sign is more than fifty yards away. I will put these six balls into the inside of the circle, which isn't bigger than a man's heart."

In an off-hand way, and without sighting the pistol with his eye, he discharged the six shots of his revolver. I afterward saw that all the bullets had entered the circle.

As Bill proceeded to reload his pistol, he said to me with a naïveté of manner which was meant to be assuring:

"Whenever you get into a row be sure and not shoot too quick. Take time. I've known many a feller slip up for shootin' in a hurry."

It would be easy to fill a volume with the adventures of that remarkable man. My object here has been to make a slight record of one who is one of the best—perhaps the very best—example of a class who more than any other encountered perils and privations in defense of our nationality.

One afternoon as General Smith and I mounted our horses to start upon our journey toward the East, Wild Bill came to shake hands goodby, and I said to him:

"If you have no objection I will write out for publication an account of a few of your adventures."

"Certainly you may," he replied. "I'm sort of public property. But, Kernel," he continued, leaning upon my saddlebow, while there was a tremulous softness in his voice and a strange moisture in his averted eyes, "I have a mother back there in Illinois who is old and feeble. I haven't seen her this many a year, and haven't been a good son to her, yet I love her better than any thing in this life. It don't matter much what they say about me here. But I'm not a cut-throat and vagabond, and I'd like the old woman to know what'll make her proud. I'd like her to hear that her runaway boy has fought through the war for the Union like a true man."

(William Hitchcock—called *Wild Bill, the Scout of the Plains*—shall have his wish. I have told his story precisely as it was told to me, confirmed in all important points by many witnesses; and I have no doubt of its truth.—G.W.N.)

## THE DEATH OF WILD BILL

Gold had been discovered in the Black Hills by Horatio Ross, one of Custer's scouts, in July, 1874. This find was re-

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[1] From *Wild Bill Hickok, The Prince of Pistoleers*, by Frank J. Wilstach, pp. 266-269, 270-275, 280-293. Copyright, 1926, by Doubleday, Page & Company, Garden City, New York.

ported to the War Department by General Custer, but as the Black Hills was included in the Sioux land, for which negotiations were then in progress, the report of the discovery was suppressed until June, 1875.

But the news leaked out and within six months of the discovery gold seekers were cradling for nuggets and dust in the streams of Black Hills gulches. As the Black Hills was on Sioux land, the Indians naturally resented the invasion. This, together with the Government's efforts to transfer them to a reservation, was the chief cause of the Sioux rebellion that resulted in the annihilation of General Custer and his entire command on the Little Big Horn.

Deadwood was an outlaw town in 1874. As the land belonged to the Indians the Government could not recognize it as a settlement. It was not so recognized until June, 1877. But when Wild Bill arrived there it was a free-and-easy place, everybody carrying a bag of gold nuggets as well as a brace of pistols. Doc Peirce was there at the time and in a letter to the writer dated October 18, 1925, he gives a minute description of the town and its people.

"Deadwood," he wrote, "had only one narrow street, filled with stumps, boulders, lumber, and logs, with hundreds of men surging from saloon to saloon—so you had to get acquainted with a majority of them, and have a speaking acquaintance. Whenever a gunman came to the gulch the word was passed along as quickly as it would be at a ladies' sewing society.

"There was Johnny Bull, who killed Farmer Peals in Salt Lake; Billy Allen, gambler; Tom Hardwick, who with his party of prospectors had killed Indians across the Canadian line, so that it took all the persuasive powers of James G. Blaine to keep the Canadian Government from hanging them. The Indians had stolen the boys' horses; that was what saved them. They killed sixty Indians and came back over the line with their stock, but this country had to surrender them. Joel Collins, the Texas cattleman, was a gunman; but he was killed just after the Big Spring robbery on the Union Pacific Railroad in the fall of '77.

"There was Laughing Sam, another gunman; and Jim Levy, the topnotcher of them all, except Wild Bill. Jim was killed down in New Mexico by Milligan, whose claim Jim had jumped. Tom Mulqueen got his afterward at Cheyenne. C. C. Clifton, one of Quantrell's old band in Missouri, was another bad hombre. He cashed in down in the Indian Territory; Boone May—in fact, all three May brothers—were quick on the draw. Deadwood was then hog-wild; duels and gunfights in the streets, and often one had to duck or fall flat on the ground to escape a shower of lead."

Wild Bill and Charlie Utter, otherwise Colorado Charlie, made their way to Deadwood, via Cheyenne, leaving the latter town on April 12th.

* * * * *

Harry Young, the barkeeper of Carl Mann's saloon, has furnished a picturesque description of Wild Bill's arrival at Deadwood. We have already seen that Young had been befriended by Wild Bill when he was a resident of Hays City.

"About the middle of June," wrote Young, "there arrived in Deadwood my old friend Wild Bill. Accompanying him was Charlie Utter, commonly known as Colorado Charlie. They were mounted, and a more picturesque sight could not be imagined than Wild Bill on horseback. This character had never been north of Cheyenne before this. Many in Deadwood knew him; many knew him only by reputation, particularly those who came from Montana. Among these Montana people were a good many men of note. I mean by that, gunmen, and the arrival of this character in town caused quite a commotion.

"They rode up to the saloon where I was working, both of them having known Carl Mann before. He being a great friend of Bill's they naturally called on him first. They dismounted and walked into the saloon, great crowds following them, until the room was packed. Mann cordially received them, asking them to make his saloon their headquarters, which they agreed to do. This meant money to Mann, as Bill would be a great drawing card. After the excitement of Bill's arrival had subsided a little Bill looked at me a few moments, then said:

"'Kid, here you are again, like the bad penny, but I am awfully glad to see you.' And turning to Carl Mann, he remarked, 'I first met this kid in Hays City, Kansas, and wherever I go he seems to precede me, but he is a good boy and you can trust him. Take my word for that.'"

It has frequently been stated that Bill went to the hills merely as a gambler and with no idea of prospecting for gold. This is not true. In the Deadwood *Telegram* of November 13, 1922, the writer finds: "Wild Bill sought to accumulate gold by manipulating the picture cards rather than by digging in the earth for it."

Buel, however, makes the positive statement that "Bill established himself in Deadwood to watch for an opportunity to make a profitable strike. He had located several claims." This would not indicate that his sole interest in the Black Hills was the picture cards of Deadwood, although when not otherwise occupied it is pretty certain that he spent his spare time playing his favorite game, poker. There are two letters written by Wild Bill at the time to his wife. One of these, dated July 19, 1876, disproves the theory that he had no interest in those parts as a miner. Here follows the letter, now in the possession of Gil Robinson, whose wife was Wild Bill's daughter-in-law, Emma, who is mentioned in the letter:

MY OWN DARLING WIFE AGNES:

I have but a few moments left before this letter starts. I never was as well in my life, but you would laugh to see me now—just got in from prospecting. Will go away again tomorrow. Will write again in the morning, but God knows when the letter will start. My friend will take this to Cheyenne if he lives. I don't expect to hear from you, but it is all the same; I know my Agnes and only live to love her. Never mind, pet, we will have a home yet, then we will be so happy. I am almost sure I will do well here. The man is hurrying me. Goodbye, dear wife. Love to Emma.

J. B. HICKOK

Had it not been for Bill's courage he might very well have met with a tragic fate even earlier than he did. There were a number of Montana gun fighters in Deadwood at the time of his arrival. Bill was envied by these men, for it appears that his reputation was much the same as that of a prize fighter who has sent all his opponents down to defeat. He was the champion. Gun fighters at that time aspired to kill any one of their number who had a superior record and thus lay claim to the championship. One night in the Montana saloon, six gun fighters, envious of Bill's prowess, were criticizing him, and openly threatening that they would get rid of him. A friend of Bill's overheard this talk and reported it to him. Bill immediately put his revolvers in order, and going straight to the Montana saloon, walked up to the crowd.

"I understand that you cheap, would-be gun fighters from Montana have been making remarks about me," he said. "I want you to understand unless they are stopped there will shortly be a number of cheap funerals in Deadwood. I have come to this town, not to court notoriety, but to live in peace, and do not propose to stand for your insults."

Whereupon Bill ordered the six men to stand against the wall and deliver up their guns. This they did in a sheepish manner. He then backed out of the saloon, and it was the last he heard of the Montana crowd aspiring to the championship.

* * * * *

. . . Wild Bill was now living in peace with everyone in

Deadwood, as he had travelled far from his former conflicts with the bad men of Hays and Abilene. O. W. Coursey, the historian of the Black Hills, now a resident of Mitchell, South Dakota, has made a searching investigation of those wild times. He learned that Bill had a premonition when he entered Deadwood Gulch that his end was near. When the party reached the top of the upland divide (Break Neck Hill) and looked over into Deadwood Gulch for the first time, he said to Colorado Charlie Utter, "I have a hunch that I am in my last camp and will never leave this gulch alive."

"Quit dreaming," retorted Utter.

"No, I am not dreaming," replied Wild Bill. "Something tells me that my time is up, but where it is coming from I do not know, as I cannot think of one living enemy who would wish to kill me."

On the evening before he was killed he was standing up leaning against the jamb of the door to the building in which he was to be assassinated the next day, looking downcast.

"Bill, why are you looking so dumpy tonight?" Tom Dosier asked him.

"Tom, I have a presentiment that my time is up and that I am soon going to be killed," Bill replied.

"Oh, pooh, pooh!" said Tom. "Don't get to seeing things; you're all right."

A letter written by Wild Bill to his wife on that same evening lends reality to this legend:

AGNES DARLING:

If such should be we never meet again, while firing my last shot, I will gently breathe the name of my wife—Agnes—and with wishes even for my enemies I will make the plunge and try to swim to the other shore.

J. B. HICKOK

Acc - No = 2713

On the following afternoon, Wednesday, August 2, 1876, he was engaged in a game of poker in a saloon owned by Carl Mann and Jerry Lewis.

There is some diversity of opinion as to the name of this place. O. W. Coursey says it was No. 6; Harry Young, the barkeeper, in his "Hard Knocks," says it was No. 66: while Brown and Willard, in "Black Hill Trails," give it as No. 10.

Those sitting at the table beside Wild Bill were Carl Mann, Charles Rich, and Captain Massey, the latter a former Missouri River pilot. As the game progressed the quartet were joking and laughing.

For the first time known, Wild Bill was sitting with his back to a door. While he was facing the front door, a rear door was standing open. Charlie Rich had taken Bill's seat next to the wall, just to plague him, and kept it, though several times Bill asked Charlie to exchange places. Rich said afterward that he was the cause of Bill's murder.

Jack McCall, the assassin, entered the saloon in a careless manner, not giving the least hint of his cowardly purpose. He walked up to the bar, at which Harry Young was officiating, and then sauntered around to a point a few yards behind Wild Bill. He then swiftly drew a .45-calibre Colt and fired. The bullet passed through Bill's head, issued beneath his right cheek bone and before it had spent its course, pierced Captain Massey's left arm. The time was 4:10 P. M.

In his letter to the writer Mr. Peirce gives several details that have not heretofore been revealed. Doc Peirce was the impromptu undertaker who took charge of the remains and looked after the details of the burial:

"Now, in regard to the position of Bill's body," writes Mr. Peirce, "when they unlocked the door for me to get his body, he was lying on his side, with his knees drawn up just as he slid off his stool. We had no chairs in those days—and his fingers were still crimped from holding his poker hand. Charlie Rich, who sat beside him, said he never saw a muscle move. Bill's hand read 'aces and eights'—two pair, and since that day aces and eights have been known as 'the dead man's hand' in the Western country. It seemed like fate, Bill's taking off. Of the murderer's big Colt's .45 six-gun, every chamber loaded, the cartridge that killed Bill was the only one that would fire. What would have been McCall's chances if he had snapped one of the other cartridges when he sneaked up and held his gun to Bill's head? He would now be known as No. 37 on the file list of Mr. Hickok."

It has been stated that Bill occupied a cabin which stood in a little copse near the spot where the Burlington depot now stands in the city of Deadwood; but Doc Peirce states that Bill was living in a tent, a wagon cover stretched over a pole. Colorado Charlie Utter was his tent mate. It was to this tent that the body was taken by Doc Peirce to prepare it for burial.

In a former statement he said: "When Bill was shot through the head he bled out quickly and when he was laid out he looked like a wax figure. I have seen many dead men on the field of battle and in civil life, but Wild Bill was the prettiest corpse I have ever seen. His long moustache was attractive, even in death, and his long tapering fingers looked like marble."

The following funeral notice was printed and distributed among the miners of the district:

FUNERAL NOTICE

Died in Deadwood, Black Hills, August 2, 1876, from the effects of a pistol shot, J. B. Hickok (Wild Bill) formerly of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Funeral services will be held at Charlie Utter's camp on Thursday afternoon, August 3d, 1876, at three o'clock P. M.

All are respectfully invited to attend.

The body of Wild Bill was enclosed in a coffin made from rough boards. Mr. Peirce had deftly closed the wound in his cheek so that it was scarcely noticeable. Bill's countenance was one of perfect peace, while his long beautiful light brown hair lay parted evenly across his forehead and fell gracefully down to his broad shoulders. According to an eye witness, an expression of calm contentment crowned his features; the lips were slightly parted as if still smiling at the last joke that was passed around the table when the fatal shot was fired. Colorado Charlie had placed beside him in the coffin the Sharps rifle that Bill had carried for many years.

A grave had been dug at Ingleside, then a romantic spot on the mountain slope. A clergyman read the funeral service and on a large stump at the head of the grave was rudely carved the following inscription:

A brave man, the victim of an assassin,
J. B. Hickok (Wild Bill) age 39 years;
murdered by Jack McCall, Aug. 2, 1876.

Captain Jack Crawford, the poet scout, and one of Wild Bill's most intimate friends, commemorated his burial in verse. This poem is dedicated to Colorado Charlie Utter:

### BURIAL OF WILD BILL

Under the sod in the prairie land
  We have laid him down to rest,
With many a tear from the sad, rough throng,
  And the friends he loved the best;
And many a heartfelt sigh was heard
  As over the sward we trod,
And many an eye was filled with tears
  As we covered him with the sod.

Under the sod in the prairie land
  We have laid the good and true—

An honest heart and a noble scout
  Has bade us a last adieu.
No more his silvery voice will ring,
  His spirit has gone to God;
Around his faults let charity cling,
  While we cover him with the sod.

Under the sod in the land of gold
  We have laid the fearless Bill;
We called him Wild, yet a little child
  Could bend his iron will.
With generous heart he freely gave
  To the poorly clad, unshod—
Think of it, pards—of his noble traits—
  While you cover him with the sod.

Under the sod in Deadwood Gulch
  You have laid his last remains;
No more his manly form will hail
  The Red Man on the plains.
And, Charlie, may Heaven bless you!
  You gave him a "bully good send";
Bill was a friend to you, pard,
  And you were his last, best friend.

You buried him 'neath the old pine tree,
  In that little world of ours,
His trusty rifle by his side—
  His grave all strewn with flowers;
His manly form in sweet repose,
  That lovely silken hair—
I tell you, pard, it was a sight,
  That face so white and fair!

The pall-bearers were William Hillman, John Oyster, Charlie Rich, Jerry Lewis, Charles Young, and Tom Dosier.

In a letter written by Wild Bill's sister Lydia, in 1896, she gives a pathetic picture of the arrival of the news of her brother's death at Troy Grove, Illinois.

"I remember the day the paper came," she wrote, "with the news of Bill's murder. Mother had been a sufferer from inflammatory rheumatism for two years before that and had not taken a step for eighteen months. My sister was standing at the gate when a neighbor came by and brought the Chicago paper, giving an account of Bill's death. He handed it to my sister. She took it and saw the headlines, but did not read all of it. She folded it up and hurried into the house, hiding the paper in the kitchen behind the mirror on the shelf. Then composing herself she went in where Mother was sitting.

" 'Mother,' she said, 'I am going over to the store a minute and will be right back.'

"She put on her bonnet and ran to the little store about two hundred yards away to tell one of my brothers. All came back to the house together. When they entered the sitting room, there sat Mother, the newspaper lying at her side, slowly rocking back and forth, while the blood from a hemorrhage of the lungs dyed the front part of her dress.

" 'I saw you get the paper,' she said, 'and when you did not bring it in, I went and got it.'

"She never fully recovered from the blow, and she died two years later, still mourning Bill's terrible death."

Within three years Deadwood had grown so rapidly that it was found necessary to remove the bodies in the old graveyard where Wild Bill lay. On August 3, 1879, Charlie Utter and Lewis Shoenfield, old friends of Bill's, arranged for the removal of the remains to Mount Moriah cemetery. Upon removing the coffin lid, it was found that few changes had taken place in the features. In short, Wild Bill lay after three years as if he had been merely asleep. The same smile lingered on his lips, as if the sleeper was in a pleasant dream.

An account of the exhumation of the remains was published in the Deadwood *Telegram* of November 13, 1922, in which it was stated that those who assisted the undertaker "were astounded to find that by some natural embalming process of the soil, accomplished by water which had percolated through the coffin, the body of Wild Bill had been so well embalmed as to preserve even the outlines of his features and the lines of the manifold pleatings of the dress shirt which he wore. This preservation of the body gave rise to the report that it had been petrified, but Mr. McClintock states that from his examination he would call it an embalming, rather than a petrification, by the deposition of minerals in the tissues of the body."

This lot and grave had been prepared by Colorado Charlie Utter, who had given the remains their second burial. A marble headstone was placed at the head of the grave inscribed as follows:

WILD BILL
J. B. HICKOK
KILLED BY THE ASSASSIN
JACK MC CALL
DEADWOOD CITY
BLACK HILLS
AUGUST 2, 1876
PARD, WE WILL MEET AGAIN IN THE HAPPY
HUNTING GROUNDS TO PART NO MORE.
GOODBYE
COLORADO CHARLIE.
C. H. UTTER

So great had Wild Bill's fame become that in the ten succeeding years visitors to Mount Moriah cemetery had chipped off pieces of the headstone as souvenirs until little or nothing was left of it. When a new headstone and full-length statue was arranged for, it was decided that in order to save the tomb from desecration by vandals it should be surrounded by a steel cage. This new monument and statue was erected in 1892. It was carved by James H. Riordan, a sculptor of New York, who was visiting in that locality.

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## Billy the Kid

### THE "WAR OF BILLY THE KID"

### CHAPTER V

### *Lincoln County War*

To the average dweller in that portion of the great West known as New Mexico, the Lincoln County war is as well known as was the internecine "War of the Roses" to the people of the time of York and Lancaster. Its causes and its results yet form the theme of conversation around the camp fire, on a winter's night, or a summer's evening, and it will be many years before the tale will have grown old and uninteresting. Were nothing else needed to make it live the mere fact that The Kid was a leading spirit in the deadly strife would suffice to give it a certain place in history. Much as small men are known as the husbands of Mrs. ——, the actress, or lecturer, will the Lincoln imbroglio be known as the "War of Billy the Kid."

According to Marion Turner, who was a prominent actor in the war, the trouble began with the determination of "Old John Chisum" and partner, Alex McSwain, to establish a monopoly of the stock-grazing business and make themselves in truth the cattle kings of the Pecos Valley. This valley is, next to that of the Rio Grande, the most important in the Territory, running as it does almost along its entire length from North to South, and is, with the exception of the Rio Hondo, the only one of any size in Lincoln County. To have entire command of such a range would be a for-

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From *The Cowboy's Career, or The Dare Devil Deeds of "Billy, the Kid," the Noted New Mexican Desperado*, by "One of the Kids." Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co. St. Louis: Belford & Clarke Publishing Co. 1881. (From a typewritten transcript loaned by Philip Edward Stevenson.)

tune in itself. Chisum drove in 80,000 head of cattle. The herds of the smaller rancheros were swept away, as if by an avalanche, by this multitude of hoofs and horns; naturally enough those who lost their little all in this manner attempted to reclaim their animals. This was dangerous business and collisions between the herders were of daily occurrence. The smaller fry banded together under the leadership of Murphy, Dolan & Co., men who had important cattle interests and were anxious to defend them. Both sides enlisted all the strength and influence they could command and prepared for what bid fair to be a deadly conflict. Chisum and McSwain, in a happy moment, hired The Kid, and his dare-devil ways, his deadly marksmanship, his perfect command of a horse, combined with what seemed to be an absolute delight in murder, soon caused him to be made the leader of his faction. The strife progressed with alternate success and defeat for each party. Early in 1879 Chisum arranged for the appointment of The Kid as deputy constable and, clothed in this authority, he was given a warrant for the arrest, on a trivial charge, of Billy Morton and Frank Baker, two herders employed by Tom Catron. This Catron, by the way, used to live in Lafayette County, Missouri, and was the partner of Hon. Stephen B. Elkins, himself a Missouri boy, later delegated to Congress from New Mexico and now one of the moneyed men of New York. The Kid saddled his horse, when told what was to be done, and, without a word to any of his comrades, silently rode off to the range in search of his prey, accompanied by one McCluskey. He found Morton and his companion in a camp near the eastern boundary of the county, and showing him the warrant said:

"You are my prisoners. Come along."

"What do you want of me?" said Morton, in a threatening tone.

"Shut up, or I'll blow your brains out. You have been working against Chisum. That's enough."

"We'll see about this pretty soon, young man," said Baker.

"It's a free country and no man arrests me without I know what it's for."

"Haven't I told your white-livered friend the reason? Hold your tongue or I'll stop it forever with a bullet."

At this point McCluskey interfered and remonstrated with the young desperado.

"You don't mean to kill a defenseless man, do you?" he said.

"If I wish to, yes; and you, too."

With these words The Kid drew his revolver and before the astonished McCluskey could move his hand shot him in his tracks.

"You see how I treat men who fool with me, do you?" the murderer said, as he scornfully kicked the lifeless form at his feet. "Be careful what you do or I'll serve you as I have him."

Chaining the two men together by the wrists and carefully securing them to the saddle he placed them both upon McCluskey's horse and started back at a slow trot towards Chisum's ranch. The feelings of the prisoners can easily be imagined. Should they be taken into camp the vengeance of Chisum would be upon their heads. There was, at least, a chance of escape. If the handcuffs could only be loosened and the chain parted a successful break might be made. Those "ifs" must be gotten out of the way in the next twenty miles. The men worked cautiously and had almost freed themselves, when the watchful eye of The Kid espied their movements. Without saying a word he coolly drew his rifle to his shoulder and fired twice at them. As the distance was only ten feet and his aim sure the reports were followed by the simultaneous fall of both Morton and Baker, and in a moment their souls had flown to what we may hope was a greener range, where even the cowboy has a place. Shot dead with hardly an excuse. Thus The Kid added two more to the list of those who had felt his deadly power. Thus far he had killed four men and the career of this pseudo James boy had hardly begun. Fearful in its beginning the reader must judge the righteousness of the end.

Riding into camp The Kid informed Chisum of what he had done and asked that two men be sent out to bury them.

"Where is McCluskey?" asked Chisum.

"None of your —— business," replied The Kid.

"It is my business and I will know. I am not afraid of you and you may as well understand it now as any time."

"Come, come, old feller," he said, changing his tone and manner, "I was just bantering you a little. Now to be honest about it, I killed Mac."

"Killed him!"

"That's the racket."

"Why, what had he done?"

"Too infernally inquisitive. Didn't know his place, either. Thought he'd try to boss the job, but I settled him quick."

"He was my best man, next to you," said Chisum, after a pause, in which he eyed The Kid closely and rubbed his chin reflectively.

"Don't care if he was, he had to go."

"Do you know, Kid, that this affair will leak out and the officers will be down here to inquire into it and arrest you?"

"Chisum, you must think I'm a fool. I care no more for Brady and Hindman than I do for a dog. If they get the drop on me—all right, but The Kid won't be caught napping and don't you forget it."

"I'm afraid they'll bring the troops down on us!"

"Let them do it. If we can't whip any company of 'blue coats,' why then I'll change my name and herd sheep in the States," and with this assertion The Kid carelessly sauntered down to his tent and threw himself down to catch a few hours' sleep before morning should dawn.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Numbers Five and Six*

As hinted by Chisum, the news of the killing of Morton, McCluskey and Baker quickly reached the ears of the authorities of the county. Although a wild section, a triple murder could not be winked at, or a reign of lawlessness would ensue destructive of the already loose fabric of society and containing elements of disaster of great moment to the cattle men and their employes, as well as to the few farmers and store keepers of Lincoln County. When Sheriff Brady first heard of The Kid's bloody deed from the lips of a special detective, who, in turn, learned the fact from one of Chisum's men—a friend of the murdered parties, and who had recently been discharged because of suspected intimacy with the opposing faction—he realized that in capturing the murderer he would have no easy task to perform. The matter was talked over carefully with his deputy, George Hindman, and it was resolved to at once proceed to Chisum's ranch and, if possible, effect the capture. No one else was taken into the secret, as it was feared that The Kid might be informed of the intended raid of the officers and prepare himself accordingly. The precaution was, however, an unnecessary one, since he was always ready to meet a personal enemy or an officer of the law, knowing himself to be practically an outcast, with the hand of almost every man against him.

The news came to Brady Wednesday. The murders were committed Monday. The officers left Thursday, bound for the home of The Kid. Each was heavily armed and rode a horse of fine staying power. The trip was a solemn one. They fully recognized the fact that the chances of coming back alive were hardly even. Indeed, before the start was made, they settled their business affairs and otherwise made ready for any emergency.

"I confess I don't like this," remarked Hindman to his superior as they galloped out of Lincoln.

"You are not afraid, are you?" responded Brady.

"No man ever saw George Hindman turn pale, even when looking down the barrel of a rifle in the hands of an enemy," he said, "but I can't shake off the feeling, somehow or other, that we won't come out of the fight alive."

"The Kid is a bad man, I know," replied Brady, after a moment's thought, "but if I take him off his guard he will be my prisoner and no blood will be spilled, either."

"Catch a cat sleeping. The Kid is surrounded by men who will defend him to the last. I tell you it's a bad job. We are in for it, though."

It will be seen that they did not walk into the trap blindly but with eyes open. It is all very well to praise the immortal six hundred who made the charge at Balaklava; one may become enthusiastic at the bravery of the men at Bunker Hill, or Vicksburg, but to the unprejudiced mind this act of Brady and Hindman had in it more elements of heroism than the others. The one faced death in behalf of an idea and surrounded by all the glory of conquest and insanity of battle; the other, in behalf of law and order, quietly took even chances of death or life without a murmur and alone.

A few words will tell the story. All day Thursday The Kid seemed possessed with the idea that something would happen. As he expressed himself to a comrade: "Either I or the man whom I meet will die to-day." At an early hour he cleaned his rifle carefully, loaded it with a heavy ball and an extra charge of powder, placed a new cap in position, looked to the proper equipment of his Derringers and was never for a moment off his guard. Between the hours of eleven and twelve his watchful eye discerned two horsemen slowly riding to the ranch from the west. At the instant he espied them they were fully five miles off. In forty minutes they would be at the ranch; in twenty they would be near enough to be recognized. As they came nearer, making a detour to the south, hoping to reach a grove and escape observation until almost at their destination, The Kid procured a spy glass and leveled it in the direction of the approaching horsemen.

"The officers!" was all he said.

Quietly walking to McSwain's adobe, which was located near the outside of the little hamlet, he placed himself in readiness. Five—ten—fifteen—twenty minutes had elapsed. A sound was heard around the corner—the measured tramp of approaching feet. The Kid peered cautiously around the corner. The two officers. Then he discovered himself to them, at the same time raising his rifle to the shoulder, and pulling the trigger, with the barrel aimed at Brady's heart, there was a quick flash, followed by a loud report and a white cloud of smoke; then another flash and another report. The south wind quickly cleared the air, and stepping forward, with Derringer drawn, The Kid saw Brady and Hindman at his feet, the one dead, the other breathing faintly and asking to be put out of his misery.

"You shall go as quick as I can send you," the cowboy said. "Give Baker my love," and he placed the muzzle of his Derringer at Hindman's right temple and finished the bloody work.

By this time a crowd had gathered, but no one, if so inclined, dared to arrest The Kid. Instead, he ordered his comrades to join him in an hour, fully equipped with arms, ammunition and horses, saying that it would be too hot for them as soon as Baker's friends discovered the murder, and that escape must be made to the mountains where a defense could be more easily made. He accordingly gathered around him a band of outlaws and desperadoes and defied county, territory and United States authorities.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Crisis*

The tacit defiance of law, the reign of terror and bloodshed inaugurated by The Kid were met in a determined manner by the proper authorities. June 15th, 1879, two days after the occurrence mentioned in the preceding chapter, Marion Turner, deputy sheriff of Lincoln County, had a warrant placed in his hands for the arrest of The Kid for the murder of Morton, Baker, McCluskey, Brady and Hindman. Turner was not only a very brave but a very wise man. He knew that the man for whom he had a warrant was a desperate character, and therefore desperate measures were resorted to to effect his capture. Turner organized a posse of thirty-five men, consisting principally of ranchmen and cowboys of the anti-Chisum faction. In adopting this course Turner not only took advantage of the general horror which every man would feel at the cold-blooded murders, but also of the peculiar and intense hatred entertained against The Kid and his gang by those who conceived their rights had been trampled on by Chisum. The posse was not a very large one, but every man in the crowd was an expert handler of the rifle and could be depended on in an emergency. As emergencies were very liable to arise, this readiness and nerviness was a good and important factor of the problem.

On the seventeenth day of June, after being out two days, Turner and his posse came upon The Kid and his sixty-five men. The place where they met was in a narrow cañon at the mouth of a range of low foot hills. To the right was a thickly wooded expanse, to the left huge boulders, with here and there a straggling pine tree, while in front ran a small stream which had its source ten miles distant, to the north. The Kid's men had made their camp five miles up the stream, and had come down to the place where it left the hills in order to reconnoiter, when they were met by Turner's posse. The former divided, one division running back to protect their camp, and the other remaining to confront the posse, each side thus being evenly balanced. Turner halted nearly a hundred yards from where The Kid was standing, and arranging his forces in the best possible manner with each man's hand on his rifle, stepped out a few steps from the ranks and read his warrant. To the requisition a defiant answer was returned to the effect that they would never get him, dead or alive; whereupon Turner ordered his men to arrest him. They advanced at a double-quick, on horseback, but The Kid, wishing to avoid a fight until he could effect a junction with the remainder of his gang, as well as secure a better position, hastily retreated. Seeing his purpose, the order was given to fire, but the aim of the posse was rendered uncertain by the motion of their horses and only two men were hit, one being seriously and the other fatally wounded. None of the Sheriff's party was touched by the return fusillade. The fight continued in this way for five miles, neither side scoring another fatal shot. A decided stand was made at the camp and Turner drew off for consultation. At the camp all was bustle and confusion. A rude embankment had been thrown up, behind which The Kid, his men, their horses and pack animals were waiting to receive the expected onslaught. The consultation between Turner and his men resulted in the employment of strategy. They retired a short distance and halted just on the edge of the wood. Ten of the party formed a line along its edge and the other twenty-five dashed into the wood with the intention of making a circuit and coming in upon the gang from the rear. This was easily accomplished, provided the ruse was successful, because The Kid's camp joined the woods on the right. The danger of the undertaking lay in the fact that if the plan was discovered the little party of ten would fall an easy prey to a foe outnumbering them six to one. The minutes that succeeded the departure of the twenty-five were anxious ones to those who remained. Every movement of the enemy was watched and a show of preparation for renewing the conflict was kept up. Five minutes had passed. The detour should have been made in that time. The Kid appeared at the head of his men and began to file out of the camp, confident of the superiority of numbers and his own charmed life. At this moment, and not a second too soon, a yell was heard from behind. Turner had flanked them. They turned, and another yell was heard. The ten who had guarded the operation of their comrades rushed up the stream. A deadly fire was poured in from two sides, and for a moment all was confusion and panic. At this juncture The Kid dashed forward, and calling upon his men to rally, broke through the opposing force, killing one of them and slightly wounding two more. He was followed by Turner, the Nemesis. Volley after volley was fired. The flight was so rapid that neither the dead nor the wounded were cared for. On! On! in feverish haste. Crossing and recrossing the little stream, turning to fire and then savagely spurring their horses forward, they fairly flew. Of the sixty-five men whom The Kid led into the cañon only forty escaped alive, while Turner lost but five. The odds had changed, and they were not as favorable to the desperado. Across the plain, dodging hither and thither, now advancing, then retreating, the two forces went, each wreaking vengeance on the other, each paying old scores and getting even with bitter enemies. Strange as it may seem, this running fight lasted two days, with scarcely a stop for food or water. The forces by this time had become considerably reduced, numbering but twenty-five each. Lieut. Col. Dudley, of the famous 9th Cavalry (colored), learning that re-enforcements were being sent to The Kid, took two companies of his regiment and went to Turner's assistance. As luck would have it Dudley was first on the ground and The Kid and his gang at once retreated towards Lincoln which was but a few miles distant. They took shelter in McSwain's house, one of the most elegantly furnished dwellings in the Territory, in which only the most fashionable were wont to enter. The cavalry rushed up but were repulsed and fell back. Again the line was formed, this time on foot, and an advance was made. The fight raged furiously. It was a question of annihilation for one side or the other, and every man fought like a demon. Port holes were cut and rifle balls sent from them with unerring aim. The house became a fort and the garden surrounding it a battlefield. During the battle Mrs. McSwain encouraged the garrison by playing martial airs on her piano, and singing inspiring battle songs. The besieging posse soon got the range of the piano from its sound, and shot it to pieces with their heavy buffalo rifles, the wife of McSwain narrowly escaping. This siege was of three days' duration. On the third day of the fight Turner, being convinced that they could not be conquered by legitimate warfare, ordered the house to be fired by throwing bucketfuls of blazing coal oil on the roof and inside through the windows. This precipitated the crisis, and about dusk of the third day the desperadoes made a rush for their horses with the intention of thereby effecting an escape. A hand to hand combat ensued in which twelve of The Kid's men and two of Turner's posse were killed, McSwain being among the number. During the rush from the burning house, Tom O'Fallaher, a "pard" of The Kid's, young, and from San Antonio, Texas, noticed a friend fall. Although a storm of balls and buckshot rained around him he coolly stopped, picked up his comrade and was about to carry him out when he noticed that he was dead. Throwing the body down he drew a sword and fought his way out. This brave fellow was afterwards killed by Deputy Sheriff Garrett's posse, shortly after the capture of The Kid.

The leader of the gang, The Kid, seemed to bear a charmed existence. A hundred bullets were speeded towards him and not one reached the mark. He escaped without a scratch, and with barely a dozen men fled, hotly pursued but never caught. Immediately after this fearful flight he reorganized his followers, received accessions to his cause, and was again in condition to make the average New Mexican go to bed with a feeling of insecurity. The Kid in the meanwhile had added five names to his death-roll. It now numbered eleven.

## DEATH OF BILLY THE KID

In March, 1881, a Deputy United States Marshal by the name of John W. Poe arrived in the booming mining camp of White Oaks. He had been sent to New Mexico by the Cattlemen's Association of the Texas Panhandle. Cattle King Charlie Goodnight, being the president of the association, had selected Mr. Poe as the proper man to put a stop to the stealing of Panhandle cattle by "Billy the Kid" and gang.

After the "Kid's" escape, Pat Garrett went to White Oaks and deputized John W. Poe to assist him in rounding up the "Kid."

From now on Mr. Poe made trips out in the mountains trying to locate the young outlaw. The "Kid's" best friends argued that he was "nobody's fool," and would not remain in the United States, when the Old Mexico border was so near. They didn't realize that little Cupid was shooting his tender young heart full of love-darts, straight from the heart of pretty little Miss Dulcinea del Toboso, of Fort Sumner.

Early in July, Pat Garrett received a letter from an acquaintance by the name of Brazil, in Fort Sumner, advising him that the "Kid" was hanging around there. Garrett at once wrote Brazil to meet him about dark on the night of

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From *History of "Billy the Kid,"* by Chas. A. Siringo, pp. 124-133. The true life of the most daring young outlaw of the age. He was the leading spirit in the bloody Lincoln County, New Mexico, war. When a bullet from Sheriff Pat Garrett's pistol pierced his breast he was only twenty-one years of age, and had killed twenty-one men, not counting Indians. His six years of daring outlawry has never been equalled in the annals of criminal history. Copyright, 1920, by Chas. A. Siringo.

July 13th at the mouth of the Taiban arroyo, below Fort Sumner.

Now the sheriff took his trusted deputy, John W. Poe, and rode to Roswell, on the Rio Pecos. There they were joined by one of Mr. Garrett's fearless cowboy deputies, "Kip" McKinnie, who had been raised near Uvalde, Texas.

Together the three law officers rode up the river towards Fort Sumner, a distance of eighty miles. They arrived at the mouth of Taiban arroyo an hour after dark on July 13th, but Brazil was not there to meet them. The night was spent sleeping on their saddle blankets.

The next morning Garrett sent Mr. Poe, who was a stranger in the country, and for that reason would not be suspicioned, into Fort Sumner, five miles north, to find out what he could on the sly, about the "Kid's" presence. From Fort Sumner he was to go to Sunny Side, six miles north, to interview a merchant by the name of Mr. Rudolph. Then when the moon was rising, he was to meet Garrett and McKinnie at La Punta de la Glorietta, about four miles north of Fort Sumner.

Failing to find out anything of importance about the "Kid," John W. Poe met his two companions at the appointed place, and they rode into Fort Sumner.

It was about eleven o'clock, and the moon was shining brightly, when the officers rode into an old orchard and concealed their horses. Now the three continued afoot to the home of Pete Maxwell, a wealthy stockman, who was a friend to both Garrett and the "Kid." He lived in a long, one-story adobe building, which had been the U. S. officers' quarters when the soldiers were stationed there. The house fronted south, and had a wide covered porch in front. The grassy front yard was surrounded by a picket fence.

As Pat Garrett had courted his wife and married her in this town, he knew every foot of the ground, even to Pete Maxwell's private bedroom.

On reaching the picket gate, near the corner room, which

Pete Maxwell always occupied, Garrett told his two deputies to wait there until after he had a talk with half-breed Pete Maxwell.

The night being hot, Pete Maxwell's door stood wide open, and Garrett walked in.

A short time previous, "Billy the Kid" had arrived from a sheep camp out in the hills. Back of the Maxwell home lived a Mexican servant, who was a warm friend to the "Kid." Here "Billy the Kid" always found late newspapers, placed there by loving hands, for his special benefit.

This old servant had gone to bed. The "Kid" lit a lamp, then pulled off his coat and boots. Now he glanced over the papers to see if his name was mentioned. Finding nothing of interest in the newspapers, he asked the old servant to get up and cook him some supper, as he was very hungry.

Getting up, the servant told him there was no meat in the house. The "Kid" remarked that he would go and get some from Pete Maxwell.

Now he picked up a butcher knife from the table to cut the meat with, and started, bare-footed and bare-headed.

The "Kid" passed within a few feet of the end of the porch where sat John W. Poe and Kip McKinnie. The latter had raised up, when his spur rattled, which attracted the "Kid's" attention. At the same moment Mr. Poe stood up in the small open gateway leading from the street to the end of the porch. They supposed the man coming towards them, only partly dressed, was a servant, or possibly Pete Maxwell.

The "Kid" had pulled his pistol, and so had John Poe, who by that time was almost within arm's reach of the "Kid."

With pistol pointing at Poe, at the same time asking in Spanish: "Quien es?" (Who is that?), he backed into Pete Maxwell's room. He had repeated the above question several times. On entering the room, "Billy the Kid" walked up to within a few feet of Pat Garrett, who was sitting on Maxwell's bed, and asked: "Who are they, Pete?"

Now discovering that a man sat on Pete's bed, the "Kid" with raised pistol pointing towards the bed, began backing across the room.

Pete Maxwell whispered to the sheriff: "That's him, Pat." By this time the "Kid" had backed to a streak of moonlight coming through the south window, asking: "Quien es?" (Who's that?)

Garrett raised his pistol and fired. Then he cocked the pistol again and it went off accidentally, putting a hole in the ceiling, or wall.

Now the sheriff sprang out of the door onto the porch, where stood his two deputies with drawn pistols.

Soon after, Pete Maxwell ran out, and came very near getting a ball from Poe's pistol. Garrett struck the pistol upward, saying: "Don't shoot Maxwell!"

A lighted candle was secured from the mother of Pete Maxwell, who occupied a nearby room, and the dead body of "Billy the Kid" was found stretched out on his back with a bullet wound in his breast, just above the heart. At the right hand lay a Colt's-.41 calibre pistol, and at his left a butcher knife.

Now the native people began to collect—many of them being warm friends of the "Kid's." Garrett allowed them to take the body across the street to a carpenter shop, where it was laid out on a bench. Then lighted candles were placed around the remains of what was once the bravest, and coolest, young outlaw who ever trod the face of the earth.

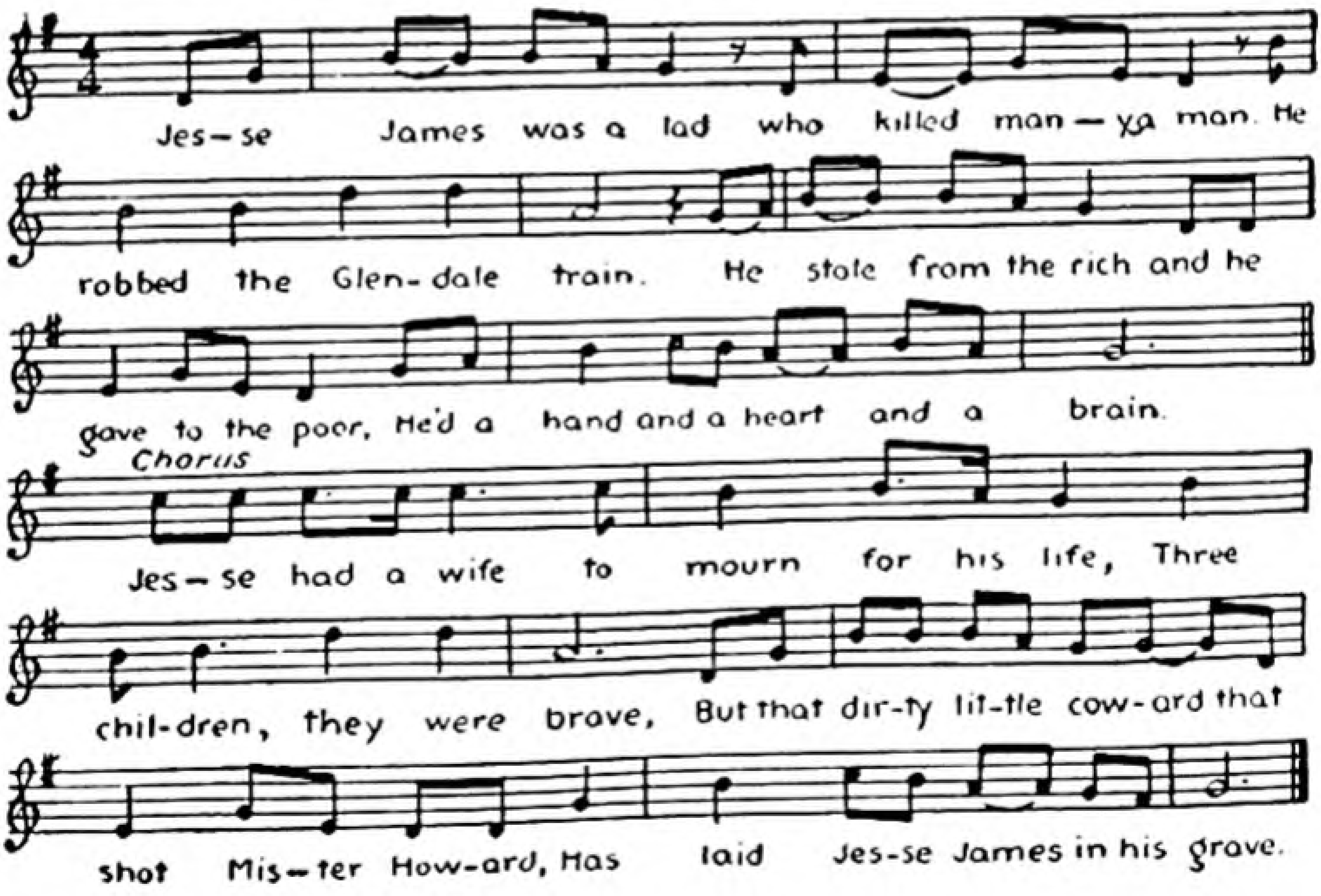
The next day, this once mother's darling was buried by the side of his chum, Tom O'Fallaher, in the old military cemetery.

He was killed at midnight, July 14th, 1881, being just twenty-one years, seven months and twenty-one days of age, and had killed twenty-one men, not including Indians, which he said didn't count as human beings.

## The Ballad of Jesse James

Jesse James was a lad who killed many a man.
He robbed the Glendale train.
He stole from the rich and he gave to the poor,
He'd a hand and a heart and a brain.

*Chorus:*
Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life,
Three children, they were brave,
But that dirty little coward that shot Mister Howard,
Has laid Jesse James in his grave.


Jes-se James was a lad who killed man-ya man. He
robbed the Glen-dale train. He stole from the rich and he
gave to the poor, He'd a hand and a heart and a brain.
Chorus
Jes-se had a wife to mourn for his life, Three
chil-dren, they were brave, But that dir-ty lit-tle cow-ard that
shot Mis-ter How-ard, Has laid Jes-se James in his grave.

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From *Singing Cowboy*, A Book of Western Songs, collected and edited by Margaret Larkin, pp. 158-159. Copyright, 1931, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. New York.

It was Robert Ford, that dirty little coward,
I wonder how he does feel,
For he ate of Jesse's bread and he slept in Jesse's bed,
Then he laid Jesse James in his grave.

Jesse was a man, a friend to the poor.
He'd never see a man suffer pain,
And with his brother Frank he robbed the Chicago bank,
And stopped the Glendale train.

It was on a Wednesday night, the moon was shining bright,
He stopped the Glendale train,
And the people all did say for many miles away,
It was robbed by Frank and Jesse James.

It was on a Saturday night, Jesse was at home,
Talking to his family brave,
Robert Ford came along like a thief in the night,
And laid Jesse James in his grave.

The people held their breath when they heard of Jesse's death,
And wondered how he ever came to die,
It was one of the gang called little Robert Ford,
That shot Jesse James on the sly.

Jesse went to his rest with hand on his breast,
The devil will be upon his knee,
He was born one day in the county of Shea
And he came of a solitary race.

This song was made by Billy Gashade,[1]
As soon as the news did arrive,
He said there was no man with the law in his hand
Could take Jesse James when alive.

Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life,
Three children, they were brave,
But that dirty little coward that shot Mister Howard,
Has laid Jesse James in his grave.

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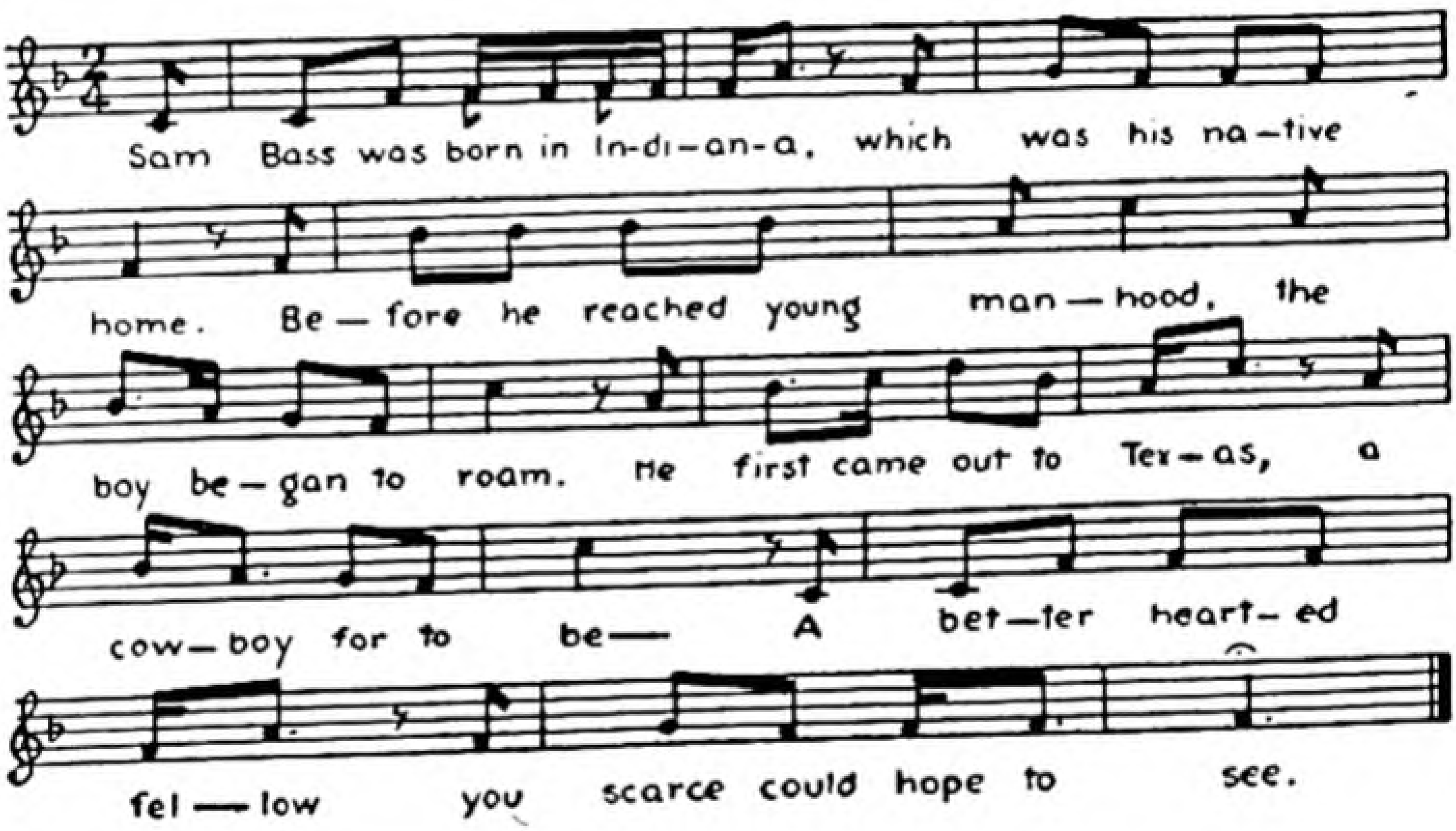
[1] An example of the ballad convention of "claim to authorship."

## The Song of Sam Bass

That night the song of *Sam Bass* was sung. It generally is, where men are who know it. The old wanderer was the singer, and did his part with gusto, with the song halted frequently to enable the singer to give parenthetical explanations. It was something like this:

"This is the song of Sam Bass. He was a true-blooded hero. He was a kindly natured fellow. I knew old Dad Egan, sheriff of Denton County, Sam's first boss. This is how the song goes:


Sam Bass was born in In-di-an-a, which was his na-tive
home. Be-fore he reached young man-hood, the
boy be-gan to roam. He first came out to Tex-as, a
cow-boy for to be— A bet-ter heart-ed
fel-low you scarce could hope to see.

Sam Bass was born in Indiana, which was his native home.
Before he reached young manhood, the boy began to roam.
*(In Lawrence County, he was born. Eighteen fifty-one if the grave stone don't lie, and July 21st.)*
He first came out to Texas a cowboy for to be
*(Working for Dad Egan, like I said. Then he drifted down to San Antone and after a while out to Uvalde County.)*

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From *Frontier Ballads*, heard and gathered by Charles J. Finger, pp. 65-72. Doubleday, Page & Company. Garden City, New York. Copyright, 1927, by Doubleday, Page & Company.
The tune is from *Singing Cowboy*, by Margaret Larkin, pp. 162-163.

He first came out to Texas, a cowboy for to be—
A better hearted fellow you scarce could hope to see.
*(All them fellows is good hearted. That's their downfall. Their good heartedness is. But the dad-gummed, jim-crow laws, they don't care about a man's good heartedness. Anyone knows that. See, where was I?)*

Sam bought him first some race stock and also the Denton mare.
He matched her in all races and took her to the fair.
He fairly coined money and spent it frank and free.
He drank the best of whiskey wherever he might be.
*(Let me tell this. That mare was sure good. Sam he put right smart of money into her. Cleaned up a lot, too, he did, I'd say. A little sorrel she was. Dad Egan offered Sam to give up the mare or quit his job, but Sam, he loved her like a child. A man can love a mare or his dog more faithful than a woman.)*

He left where he was working one pretty summer day
A-headin' for the Black Hills with his cattle and his pay.
In Custer City sold the lot and then went on a spree,
His chums they was all cowboys rough and hard as they could be.
*(Deadwood, it was—Deadwood, in the Dakotas. A wide-open town. Sam, his boss was Jo Collins who bought his cattle on time I've heard it said, but when he sold out, gambled and lost. So him and Sam they held up a stagecoach or two, though the song don't tell nothing of that.)*

A-ridin' back to Texas they robbed the U. P. train,
For safety split in couples and started out again.
The sheriff took Jo Collins who had a sack of mail
And with his partner landed him inside the county jail.
*(Big Springs, not Big Springs, Texas, but Big Springs in Nebraska it was. The express messenger said it was one of them dad-gummed time locks on the safe, so one of the men started to lay him out, but Sam, being kind hearted, wouldn't stand for that. So when they was about to quit, what did they come on but three boxes of gold, in twenty-dollar gold pieces, $60,000.*

*To do the thing right, they went through the cars and took another $5,000 from the passengers. This Jo Collins, he had met up with a store clerk in Ogallala, and went back to buy things after the hold-up. Sam Leech done give information and the posse caught up with Collins and Bill Heffridge in Kansas right where was some U. S. army men who lit out after the outlaws. They tried to stand off the soldiers, but the men fired and killed them both. So the song's wrong about the jail, but that's put in for poetry. You can't always have things like they are in poetry. Poetry hain't what you'd call truth. There ain't room enough in the verses. About Sam. Him and Jack Davis they lit out for Texas. Jim Berry and Dad for Mexico City, Missouri. The song goes on about Sam.)*

But Sam got back to Texas all right side up with care,
And in the town of Denton he did his money share.

*(He was the boy to do that all right. I forgot to say that this here Jim Berry he got caught by a posse, shot in the knee and his leg bone was shattered. Old Dad he got away safe with his share. . . . I'll start up that again.)*

But Sam got back to Texas all right side up with care,
And in the town of Denton he did his money share.
The lad he was so reckless, three robberies did he do,
The passenger and express car and U. S. mail car, too.

*(What isn't in the song is that Sam and Bill met up with a crowd of cavalry men and camped with 'em, joking about the robberies and them soldiers never suspicioning anything. The Texas train robberies was on the T.P. at Eagle Ford and at Mesquite Junction.)*

Now Sam he had four pardners, all bold and daring bad.
There was Richardson and Jackson, Jo Collins and Old Dad.
More daring bolder outlaws the rangers never knew,
They dodged the Texas rangers and beat them, too.

Sam had another pardner called Arkansaw for short,
But Thomas Floyd the ranger cut his career quite short.

This Floyd stood six feet in his socks and passed for mighty fly,
But them that knows will tell you he's a dead beat on the sly.

*(That about Floyd the ranger is only put in for the poetry of it. I heard tell one of the best jokes on the rangers. Good enough to go in a book. There hain't nothing what a ranger won't tackle. Well, when Fort Worth first started up there was some kind of trouble and pretty much of a riot. So they wired down to headquarters for rangers to keep order. What did they do but send this same Floyd. The mayor and the people, all het up about the trouble, was down at the depot, when this Floyd gets off. The mayor, he says, we sent for rangers. All right, says Floyd, here I am. Well, hain't there no more than one of you, asked the mayor. Why? asks Floyd. Is there more than one riot? The joke comes in where he said that, this Floyd. He knew he could handle a riot all right, single handed. Came natural to him. But the mayor couldn't see it that way. That's where the joke comes in. One ranger to one riot. It's shore funny. Anyway, him who killed Sam was Dick Ware. Did it with a .45.)*

Jim Murphy was arrested and then let out on bail,
He jumped the train for Terrel after breaking Tyler jail.
But old Mayor Jones stood in with Jim and it was all a stall,
A put-up job to catch poor Sam, before the coming fall.

*(About this Murphy. Sam he was suspicious of him and wanted to shoot Murphy. Murphy and Jackson they was cousins and there ought to be something about that in the song. But there hain't. Some poet ought to put it in. I tried but can't quite make it go right. This Murphy he agreed to doublecross Sam, agreed with General Jones, and Sam he got to hear of it. That's why he wanted to shoot him.)*

Sam met his fate at Round Rock, July the twenty-first.[1]
They dropped the boy with rifle balls and then they took his purse
Poor Sam he is a dead lad, and six foot under clay.
And Jackson's in the mesquite aiming to get away.

*(At Round Rock sure enough with Jackson holding the rangers back shooting with his right hand while he helped Sam get in the saddle. Jackson stuck by Sam to the end, with Sam shot*

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[1] 1878.

*through the kidneys. Three days Sam suffered and when he died he was buried at Round Rock. I seen the gravestone. Murphy, he committed suicide, drinking eye medicine, and there ought to be something about that in the song, but there hain't.)*

Jim, he had took Sam Bass's gold and didn't want to pay,
His only idea it was to give brave Sam away,
He sold out to Sam and Barnes and left their friends to mourn—
And Jim he'll get a scorching when Gabriel blows his horn.

Perhaps he's got to heaven, there's none of us can say,
My guess it is and surmise, he's gone the other way,
And if brave Sam should see him as in the place he rolls,
There'll be a lively mix-up down there among the coals.
*(I made up that last, to get the rights of it about Murphy going to hell.)*

"There is a lot more verses," said the old man in ending, "a regular raft of 'em, a hundred or more, for this Sam Bass he had a horse," and then came a long tale of how Sam had been pursued by rangers from Denton to Fort Concho, the animal taking steep-banked creeks at a stride, carrying its rider down cañon sides where human foot could not find place, carrying on unfalteringly, and at last, when danger threatened, waking its sleeping master by shaking him. It was an adaptation of Swift Nick and Dick Turpin, with their boldest deeds given to the Indiana lad. And at the end,

"Sam Bass he looked to east and west, to sky and silver cloud
And took his every garment to make the horse a shroud,
He dropped a tear to think that he and his brave horse must part,
'Twas not the ride that killed her but 'twas a broken heart."

## Stackalee

### HE WAS BORN WITH A VEIL OVER HIS FACE

Gypsy told Stack's mother,
Told her like a friend,
Your double-jinted baby
Won't come to no good end.

And the gypsy woman shore said a hatful, cause it all come out that very way. And how comes Stackalee's mother to call in the fawchin teller was cause he come kickin into this wide world double-jinted, and with a full set of teeth. But what scared her most was he had a veil over his face, and everybody knows that babies born with veils on their faces kin see ghosts and raise 41 kinds of hell.

### SOLD HIS SOUL TO THE DEVIL

And so when Stackalee growed up he got to be an awful rascal and rounder wit lots of triflin women and he staid drunk all the time. One dark night as he come staggerin down the road the devil popped up real sudden, like a grinnin jumpin jack. He carried Stackalee into the grave yahd and bought his soul. And that's how come Stack could go round doin things no other livin man could do, such as:

Makin himself so little he could git into a bottle on a shelf and you could look at him settin there—yes suh! And fillin a small bottle full of water and settin it in a big glass jar where it would sink to the bottom till he began to talk to it and make it rare up and drap back just howso-

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By Onah L. Spencer. From *Direction*, Vol. IV (Summer, 1941), No. 5, pp. 14-17. Copyright, 1941, by Direction, Inc.

* Edna Ferber named a steamboat in *Showboat* after Stackalee. I am also told that policy players in American Black Bottoms highly prize luck charms bearing his name, that such charms, or (in Black Bottom vernacular) mojoes, sell from one dollar up.—O. L. S.

ever he wanted it to. And by walkin barefoot on hot slag out of a pig iron furnace and never gittin burned and eatin all the hot fire you could hand him without burning his stummick and changin hisself into a mountain or varmint. Some old timers lowed they knowed him personal and that his favorite night time shape was a prowlin wolf. That's how it come they used to sing that old song about him:

> Stackalee didn't wear no shoe;
> Couldn't tell his track from horse or mule.

## THE MAGIC HAT

You see, it happened like this: Stack was crazy about Stetson hats; specially them great big five gallon hats with dimples in the crown. And he had a whole row of em hangin on pegs and you could look at em along the wall of his rickety shanty on Market Street in St. Louis, where he lived with his woman, Stack o' Dollars, that I'm goin to tell you about later.

He had a dimpled and lemon-colored yaller hat, and a black Sunday one with two white eyes to wear to funerals with his new brogans, and lots of other ones, all kinds and colors.

But his favorite was an oxblood magic hat that folks claim he made from the raw hide of a man-eatin panther that the devil had skinned alive. And like I told you, how come Stack to have it was because he had sold his soul to old Scratch. You see, Satan heard about Stack's weakness, so he met him that dark night and took him into the grave yahd where he coaxed him into tradin his soul, promisin him he could do all kinds of magic and devilish things long as he wore that oxblood Stetson and didn't let it get away from him. And that's the way the devil fixed it so when Stack did lose it he would lose his head, and kill a good citizen, and run right smack into his doom.

## HIS GIRL FRIEND

Now Stackalee had a girl friend and her name was Stack o' Dollars. She blew into St. Louis off Cincinnati's old Bucktown on the Levee where she used to run gamblin games at a saloon there called the Silver Moon, long, long ago; and she always bet her whole stack of silver dollars.

She walked into the Silver Moon
Stacked her dollars, mountain high;
Says they call me Stack o' Dollars
Cause my limit is the sky.

She had two diamond teeth with gold fillin and when she opened her mouth with a sunburst smile, didn't they glitter! Proud of them sparklers, too, cause they shined like flashlights. Wouldn't pawn em, even to get old Stackalee out on bond. And since they was fastened to her haid they was safe cause she was a fat mama with the meat shakin on her bones and she didn't need no man for a bouncer. She feared nothin and nobody. Her motto was: "Come clean, or come dirty and get cleaned." She could put a knot on a bully's haid so big that he wouldn't know whether the knot was on him or he was on the knot.

She had a full bosom, wore an eight-gallon Stetson, smoked cheroots, and was tougher than Big Mag of Chicago's old Cheyenne District. She ruled the levees with her big fist, and even old double-jinted Stackalee, big enough to go bear huntin with a willow switch, had to light out when they had them Saturday night fist fights, cause she would roll up her sleeves and begin smackin him around till their shanty shook like when Joshua fit the battle of Jericho and the walls come tumblin down. But she was good-hearted, though, when she was sober; and old long tall Stack who was a gambler with plenty of good-lookin browns claimed he like her cause she whupped him so good.

## STACKALEE GOES WEST

Now like I told you, Stack was popular with the women folks cause he could whup the blues on a guitar, and beat out boogie woogie music piano bass and the like of that, but what they liked about him most was he was so stout he could squeeze the breath out of em almost. And his favorite one was a voodoo queen down in New Orleans French market.

Any way, the women got to braggin on him bein so stout that they reckoned he could even give old Jesse James a good tussle. So Stack, with his gun handle filled with notches, knowed there was a reward out for him for men he had washed away. He lowed he was lucky 'count of his magic Stetson to keep in hidin, but he figgered he had better light out while the goin was good. So he thought he would just look up old Jesse James and give him a trial.

Stackalee went out West,
Met Jesse James, and did his best.

Yes, sir, that fool even got mixed up with Jesse James. But Jesse was too much for him—turned old Stack every way but *loose*. And Lord knows what might not have happened to Stack if the devil hadn't come down the road in a cloud of dust that got in Jesse's eyes. Leastwise, it might have saved the city of San Francisco and it might have kept old Stack from gettin into all them other amazin things I'm goin to tell you about later. And leastwise the devil wouldn't have changed hisself to look like Billy Lyons and get poor innercent Billy killed.

## STACKALEE CHANGES HIMSELF INTO A HORSE

Anyway, after the devil had saved him from Jesse James, Stack, knowin the law was hot after him, lit out again, headin west. And it was on the way over the mountains that he run into two cullud deputies on the lookout for him in order to collect the $5,000 reward offered for his arrest. So Stack set down to swap a few words with em between two big mountains[1] before they had caught on who he was. Then he told em he didn't aim to hurt em, he just wanted to know what their names was. When they told him, that sucker hauled out his forty-five and shot their initials in their hats, changed hisself into a horse, and galloped away with a lot of little baby red devils ridin on his back. And did them deputies run the other direction! They knowed it was Satan's work and they thought maybe Stack was the devil hisself.

Tell you the truth!
Think I'm lyin?
Had to run sideways
To keep from flyin.

So skeered they tore out through a graveyahd, knockin tombstones over like ten pins in a bowlin alley. And so Stack he held his sides laughin, and set down between them two big mountains and thought and thought, and finally made up his mind to go on to Frisco, where he was later called "the black Samson."

## STACKALEE LAYS SAN FRANCISCO LOW

Now here comes the most amazin part of the story. Stack had been in Frisco about a month, gettin leapin drunk, and just about runnin hisself crazy. So one morning in April, 1906, after he had had a rocky night and had a headache built for a hippopotamus he was out lookin for a sudden jerk and an eye opener to cool the burnin thirst in his throat. Into the first barroom he staggered. He didn't have penny one on him but he had a fist full of tricks and his magic oxblood Stetson and he was sure he could pull off some kind of conjuration to get his morning's juice.

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[1] Cf. "Po' Laz'us (Poor Lazarus)," *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 909-910.

But the bartender told him: "Listen here, cullud man! I ain't wettin even the bottom of a glass with gin till you shows me the color of your money."

Stack got all big at the nose and woofed: "All right, boss, you either fixes me up with that gin, or I pulls down this bar!"

The bartender he just stood there grinnin and lookin sassy. So Stack he laid a-holt of the bar with both hands and sweat as big as marbles rolled down his face while he huffed and puffed and blew.

Stack knowed that he didn't know his own strength, so when he give one last powerful jerk and down come the ceiling and whole building he said: "Mah goodness, I sure didn't aim to get *so* rough! Damned if I ain't gone and made a mess for sure!"

It happened so fast it almost skeered Stack hisself.

## IT WAS THE WATAH PIPES

Outside was more wrecks than you could shake a stick at; buildings tumblin down all over town.

"Lordy! Sure didn't know mah own strength!" Stack said to a crowd of people in the street. They tried to tell him about an earthquake, but Stack didn't pay them no mind.

"It was the watah pipes," he said. "They was all fastened together all over town. When I give that last powerful jerk, I must have pulled out a faucet in the saloon and snatched down the whole town."

Then he lit out of there for St. Louis, where he run right smack into his doom.

## HOW OLD SCRATCH TRICKED STACKALEE

You see, Stack was gettin into so much devilment that he even worried the devil, and old Satan was gettin tired waitin for Stack's soul, so he figgered out a way to trick him.

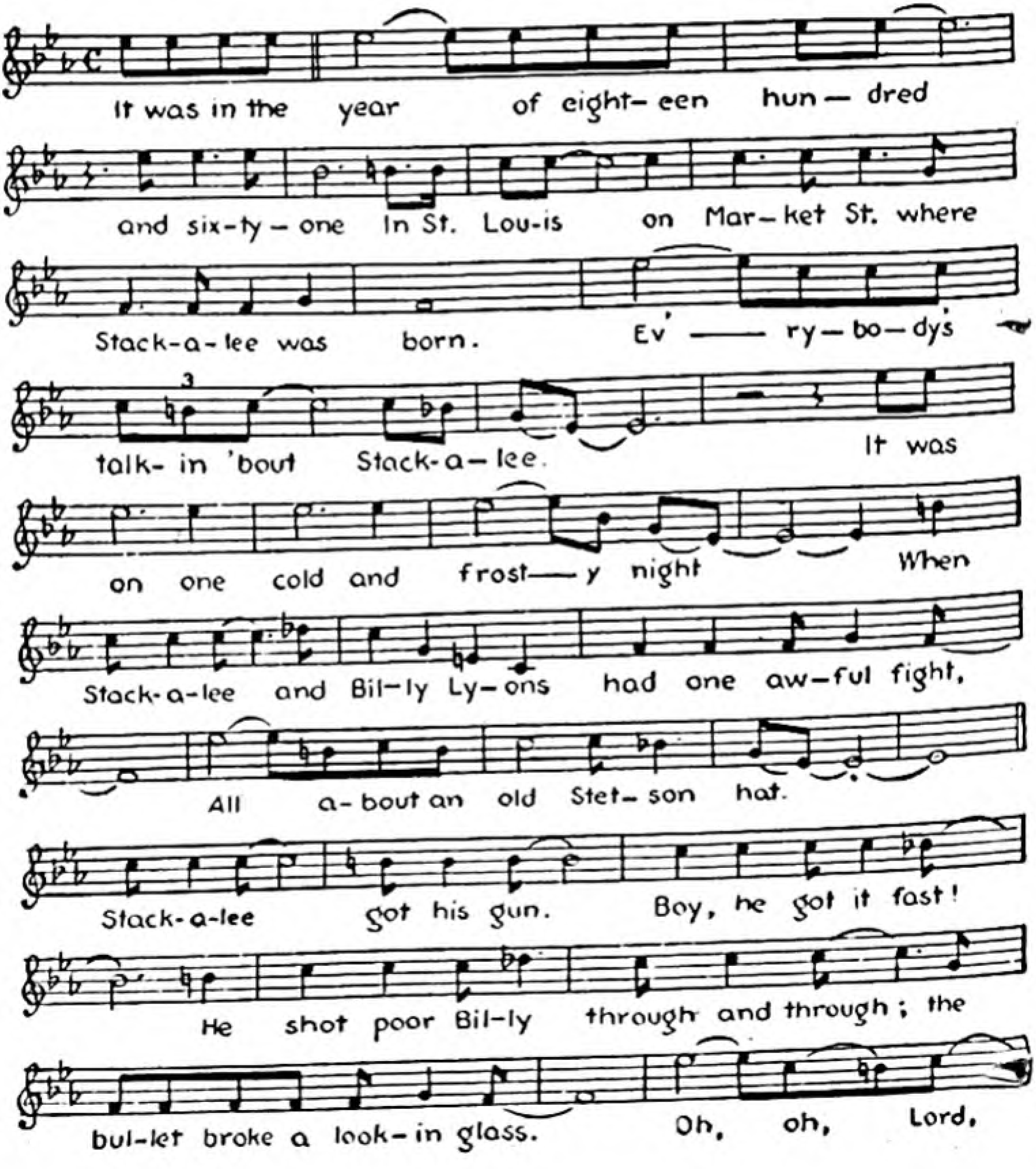
Old Scratch knowed that if Stack was killed fightin another bad man like Jesse James maybe God wouldn't let his soul go to hell. So this is the way the devil fixed it. He schemed it out to make hisself look like Billy Lyons, an innercent family man. So when Stack killed an honest family man, the Lord would be mad at him and let Satan have him.

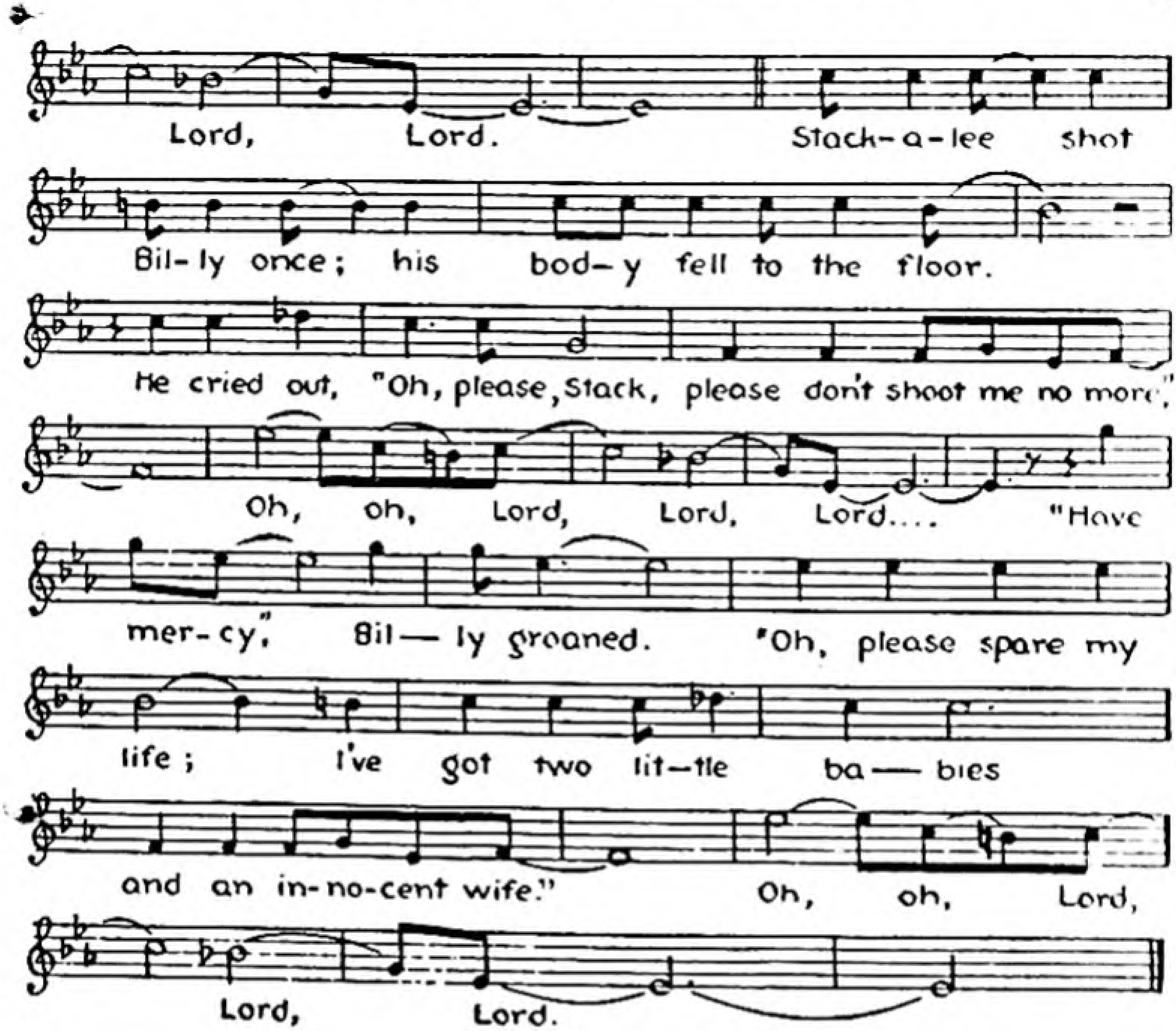
One cold, frosty Friday night when Stack was havin one of his lucky streaks in a big coon can game down at Jack o' Diamond's place in St. Louis, he was so busy pickin up his money that he hung his oxblood Stetson on the back of his cheer. That's when Old Scratch, keepin his eye peeled, changed hisself to look like Billy Lyons. Then he snatched the magic hat and tore out toward the White Elephant Barrel House where he knowed Billy was. When the devil got to the door he disappeared. Stack came runnin up and seen Billy standin by the door, lookin as innercent as you please, smokin and watchin the can can dancers.

And there is where Stack shot him through and through. Billy pleaded for his life, on account of his wife and babies. But Stack, mad as blue blazes because he had lost the magic hat that kept the law from ketchin him, blazed away and blasted poor Billy down.

So the wagon come loaded with pistols and a big gatlin gun and hauled Stack off to jail. But the police didn't kill him like the devil, settin outside the window in the shape of a black cat, hoped they would.

Instead, they slapped Stack into jail where the judge sent him to Jefferson Pen for 75 years. He's already served 34 of em and got 41 more to serve there yet. The devil is waitin for him to die so he can snatch his soul just like this song tells you:


It was in the year of eighteen hundred
and sixty-one In St. Louis on Market St. where
Stack-a-lee was born. Ev——ry—bo—dys
talk-in 'bout Stack-a—lee. It was
on one cold and frost—y night When
Stack-a-lee and Bil—ly Ly—ons had one aw—ful fight,
All a-bout an old Stet—son hat.
Stack-a-lee got his gun. Boy, he got it fast!
He shot poor Bil—ly through and through; the
bul-let broke a look-in glass. Oh, oh, Lord,


Lord, Lord. Stack-a-lee shot
Bil-ly once; his bod-y fell to the floor.
He cried out, "Oh, please, Stack, please don't shoot me no more."
Oh, oh, Lord, Lord, Lord.... "Have
mer-cy," Bil-ly groaned. "Oh, please spare my
life; I've got two lit-tle ba-bies
and an in-no-cent wife." Oh, oh, Lord,
Lord, Lord.

It was in the year of eighteen hundred and sixty-one
In St. Louis on Market Street where Stackalee was born.
 Everybody's talkin 'bout Stackalee.[1]

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[1] Refrain:

Everybody's talkin 'bout Stackalee. (Use this one most.)
That bad man Stackalee.
Oh, tough man Stackalee.
Oh, oh, Lord, Lord, Lord.
All about an old Stetson hat.

For variation the following were often used:

Oh, treacherous Stackalee.
Oh, oh, what a shame.
Oh, foolish Stackalee.
Oh, scared Stackalee.
Oh, scheming Stackalee.
Oh, worried Stackalee.
Oh, oh, what a lie.—O. L. S.

GOVT. GIRLS COLLEGE SRINAGA LIBRARY A. C. NO. ........

It was on one cold and frosty night
When Stackalee and Billy Lyons had one awful fight,
    All about an old Stetson hat.

Stackalee got his gun. Boy, he got it fast!
He shot poor Billy through and through; the bullet broke a lookin
  glass.
    Oh, oh, Lord, Lord, Lord.

Stackalee shot Billy once; his body fell to the floor.
He cried out, "Oh, please, Stack, please don't shoot me no more."

The White Elephant Barrel House was wrecked that night;
Gutters full of beer and whisky; it was an awful sight.

Jewelry and rings of the purest solid gold
Scattered over the dance and gamblin hall.

The can can dancers they rushed for the door
When Billy cried, "Oh, please, Stack, don't shoot me no more."

"Have mercy," Billy groaned. "Oh, please spare my life;
I've got two little babies and an innocent wife."

Stack says, "God bless your children, damn your wife!
You stole my magic Stetson; I'm gonna steal your life."

"But," says Billy, "I always treated you like a man.
'Tain't nothin to that old Stetson but the greasy band."

He shot poor Billy once, he shot him twice,
And the third time Billy pleaded, "Please go tell my wife."

Yes, Stackalee, the gambler, everybody knowed his name;
Made his livin hollerin high, low, jack and the game.

Meantime the sergeant strapped on his big forty-five,
Says, "Now we'll bring in this bad man, dead or alive."

And brass-buttoned policemen all dressed in blue
Came down the sidewalk marchin two by two.

Sent for the wagon and it hurried and come
Loaded with pistols and a big gatling gun.

At midnight on that stormy night there came an awful wail—
Billy Lyons and a graveyard ghost outside the city jail.

"Jailer, jailer," says Stack, "I can't sleep.
For around my bedside poor Billy Lyons still creeps.

"He comes in shape of a lion with a blue steel in his hand,
For he knows I'll stand and fight if he comes in shape of man."

Stackalee went to sleep that night by the city clock bell,
Dreaming the devil had come all the way up from hell.

Bad devil was sayin, "You better hunt your hole;
I've hurried here from hell just to get your soul."

Stackalee told him, "Yes, maybe you're right,
But I'll give even you one hell of a fight."

When they got into the scuffle, I heard the devil shout,
"Come and get this bad man before he puts my fire out."

The next time I seed the devil he was scramblin up the wall,
Yellin, "Come an get this bad man fore he mops up with us all."[1]

Then here come Stack's woman runnin, says, "Daddy, I love
you true;
See what beer, whisky, and smokin hop has brought you to.

"But before I'll let you lay in there, I'll put my life in pawn."
She hurried and got Stackalee out on a five thousand dollar bond.

Stackalee said, "Ain't but one thing that grieves my mind.

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[1] Cf. "The Farmer's Curst Wife" (Child, No. 278).

When they take me away, babe, I leave you behind."

But the woman he really loved was a voodoo queen
From Creole French market, way down in New Orleans.

He laid down at home that night, took a good night's rest,
Arrived in court at nine o'clock to hear the coroner's inquest.

Crowds jammed the sidewalk, far as you could see,
Tryin to get a good look at tough Stackalee.

Over the cold, dead body Stackalee he did bend,
Then he turned and faced those twelve jury men.

The judge says, "Stackalee, I would spare your life,
But I know you're a bad man; I can see it in your red eyes."

The jury heard the witnesses, and they didn't say no more;
They crowded into the jury room, and the messenger closed the
door.

The jury came to agreement, the clerk he wrote it down,
And everybody was whisperin, "He's penitentiary bound."

When the jury walked out, Stackalee didn't budge.
They wrapped the verdict and passed it to the judge.

Judge looked over his glasses, says, "Mr. Bad Man Stackalee,
The jury finds you guilty of murder in the first degree."

Now the trial's come to an end, how the folks gave cheers;
Bad Stackalee was sent down to Jefferson pen for seventy-five years.

Now late at night you can hear him in his cell,
Arguin with the devil to keep from goin to hell.

And the other convicts whisper, "Whatcha know about that?
Gonna burn in hell forever over an old Stetson hat!"
Everybody's talkin 'bout Stackalee.

# II. Miracle Men and Patron Saints

*Human history is work history. The heroes of the people are work heroes.—Meridel Le Sueur.*

*Whenever the sense of his own insecurity showed the need of some great artificer, some supernatural miracle-worker, man created gods in his own image.—Marion Roalfe Cox.*

## Introduction

### I WORKED FOR PAUL

When an old timer began a yarn with "Time I was with Paul up in the Big Onion Country," or "I worked for Paul out in Arizona on the biggest well that I ever worked on," he might be a windjammer or a blowhard, but in allying himself with Paul Bunyan he was, in a sense, identifying himself with the days when there were big jobs to do and big men to do them.

Among American work giants—strong men and champions, the "biggest, fastest, and bestest" men on the job—Paul Bunyan comes nearest to being the culture hero of our industrial civilization and the prototype of its titans and wizards, who combines in one colossal image the brawn of labor and the brain of business, the master workman and the master mind. Although he "may have started out as a lumber*jack*, he soon developed into a lumber*man*,"[1] and ended up as the patron saint of the lumber business and the trademark of the Red River Lumber Company, guaranteeing in its products the "quality and service you have the right to expect from Paul Bunyan."[2]

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[1] Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "The Business Man in American Folklore," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, Vol. XVIII (November, 1944), No. 5, pp. 116-117.

[2] W. B. Laughead, *Paul Bunyan and His Big Blue Ox* (1938), p. 4.

So the "mightiest of loggers" ultimately becomes a proverbial symbol of American bigness, energy, and power, a peg on which to hang a huge lie, brag, jest, or prank, with his roots deep in the American exaggerative imagination of tall tales and tall talk. With the aid of Babe, the Blue Ox (who measured forty-two ax handles and a plug of Star tobacco between the eyes and could pull anything that had two ends), he made geography as well as logging history—digging and straightening rivers, scooping out canyons, turning mountains under, and tinkering with the weather.

How the Paul Bunyan legend got its start is one problem that Paul left unsolved, and that scholars have been worrying about ever since. Some trace his name to a French Canadian original—Bon Jean (Petit Jean) or Jean (Paul) Bonhomme.[1] His giantism may retain traces of folk memories of Gargantua and Finn McCool, preserved by French and Irish lumberjacks. In the course of its westward migration from Quebec, centering in the Lake States and the Pacific Northwest, the legend attracted Scandinavian and Indian elements, and Paul incorporated traits of local heroes whom he supplanted—Jigger Jones (Johnson), Joe Mufraw, and Jean Frechette.

As to whether the legend is of folk or literary origin, the truth, as Stith Thompson suggests, probably lies somewhere between the two extremes of a "very old popular legend among American lumbermen" and "an essentially . . . literary concoction of the past thirty years."[2]

Many details of the legend are certainly literary additions. W. B. Laughead, author and illustrator of the first Paul Bunyan booklet (1914) and of Paul Bunyan stories appearing in advertisements of the Red River Lumber Company of Minnesota (now of California) claims credit for having invented the names of Babe, the Blue Ox, and many members of Paul's crew, including Brimstone Bill, Johnny Inkslinger, and Sourdough Sam.[1]

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[1] Max Gartenberg, "Paul Bunyan and Little John," *Journal of Americ Folklore*, Vol. 62 (October-December, 1949), No. 246, pp. 416-422.

[2] *The Folk-Tale* (1946), p. 250n.

As Esther Shephard has indicated, the immediate source of Paul Bunyan stories is the frontier, tall-tale humor of the 1830's and 40's and Paul's immediate progenitor is the ring-tailed roarer. In their original setting Paul Bunyan stories served as an outlet for the worker's love of tall talk, yarning, and practical joking. Originally, they were extemporaneous fragments—jests, sayings, repartee—exchanged in conversation and in boasting and lying contests. Thus many tales were told to haze or pull the leg of tenderfeet and greenhorns, as in the case of the stories of mythical monsters or "fearsome creatures of the lumber woods," which originated separately and were attracted into the Paul Bunyan saga. Other tales satirized or caricatured conditions in early-day camps (e.g., the stories of Gargantuan feeding of the men on endless pea-soup from a pea-soup lake and pancakes made on an iron stove-top griddle greased by assistant cooks skating over it with bacon rinds, hams, or bearsteaks strapped to their feet).

Paul Bunyan tales are for the most part "adaptations of tales which have elsewhere an existence in some form." Among the familiar jests that have entered into the Paul

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[1] In a letter to Louise Pound (*Southern Folklore Quarterly*, Vol. VII, p. 139n.) Laughead states that he began with what he "remembered from Minnesota logging camps (1900-1908) . . . then picked up odds and ends from letters we received and columns that ran in various newspapers, in the Seattle *Star* (1920), by Lee J. Smits, the Portland *Oregonian* (1922), by DeWitt Harry, and others. Correspondence to *The American Lumberman* also provided clues."

A still earlier printed source was established in 1944 by W. W. Charters (*Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 57, p. 188), who has identified James MacGillivray as the author of Paul Bunyan stories appearing in the Illustrated Supplement of the Detroit *News Tribune* for June 24, 1910, thus antedating not only Laughead's versions but Douglas Malloch's key poem, "The Round River Drive," in *The American Lumberman* for April 25, 1914. Harold W. Fenton's anthology, *Legends of Paul Bunyan* (1947), contains 28 pages of bibliography of Paul Bunyan tales, poetry, drama, music, art, criticism, and relevant material. The author with the largest number of entries and selections to his credit is James Stevens, who, with Esther Shephard, beginning in 1924, has perhaps done most to give the Paul Bunyan legend literary currency.

For the poem, "The Round River Drive," and other Paul Bunyan stories, see *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 206-222.

Bunyan tradition are those of the buckskin harness that stretches when wet, the pet fish that drowns when it falls into the water, Liverpool Jim who jumps across the Round River and back without touching the other shore, the oxen strayed into the hollow limbs of the tree through which they are driven, and Big Ole sinking knee-deep into solid rock while carrying one of Babe, the Blue Ox's, shoes. These and similar "key stories" have been localized in Paul Bunyan's camp on the Round River in the mythical Section 37 (there being only thirty-six sections in a township) or on the Big Onion River "three weeks this side of Quebec." After World War I Paul Bunyan invaded the oil fields and displaced Gib Morgan, oil field minstrel, as their hero.[1] Perhaps because of their more recent origin, oil-field Paul Bunyan stories are richer in occupational color.

As the Paul Bunyan tradition spread to other occupations, it tended more and more toward caricature—history turned inside out. This is part of the progressive deterioration or "dwindling of the hero" in America, first from the godlike or kinglike to the average human and subhuman level, as Lucy Lockwood Hazard notes, and then from the sublime to the ridiculous.

The "larger lunacy" of American mythology finds an able exponent in Pecos Bill, the inventor of the cow business. As a lost child who ran with the coyotes and didn't know he was human until he grew up and became a cowhand and "king killer," he has much in common with the ring-tailed roarers and bad men (pseudo and actual) of the West. In the direct Davy Crockett tradition, for example, are such exploits as hugging grizzly bears to death, using a rattlesnake as a lariat to lasso Gila monsters, riding a mountain lion "a hundred feet at a jump . . . quirtin' him down the flank with a rattlesnake," and riding an Oklahoma cyclone bareback.

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[1] Mody C. Boatright, *Gib Morgan* (1945), pp. 5-6. According to Frank Shay (*Here's Audacity*, 1930, pp. 63-75), the Paul Bunyan of the oil fields is sometimes known as Kemp Morgan. A West Virginia lumberjack counterpart of Paul Bunyan, Tony Beaver, is the hero of *Up Eel River* (1928), by Margaret Prescott Montague, who says she "stumbled upon" the myth among the lumbermen of West Virginia. In *Bowleg Bill* (1938), Jeremiah Digges (Josef Berger) elaborates on Cape Cod legends of a sea-going-cowboy hero (*A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 192-204).

Perhaps the best-known Pecos Bill yarn is a burlesque of chivalry. On their wedding day his bride, Slue-Foot Sue, made the mistake of riding Bill's horse, Widow-Maker. She was wearing a big steel-spring bustle under her wedding-gown, and when the horse threw her, she bounced, and kept on bouncing for three days and four nights, until Bill had to shoot her to keep her from starving to death. Bill's own demise is a caricature of the death of the hero, caused, according to one version, by his habit of putting fish-hooks and barbed wire in his toddy. Thus the tall tale triumphs over the epic, and reckless playfulness over cosmic fantasy.[1]

A more recently invented comic demigod, Febold Feboldson, illustrates the process by which migratory tall tales and jests in the Paul Bunyan tradition are tacked on to an apocryphal figure and given a regional setting. Originating in Gothenburg, Nebraska, along about 1927 or 1928, as the brain-child of three local newspapermen, and possibly suggested by the picturesque Olaf Bergstrom, a Swedish pioneer and reputed founder of Stromsburg and Gothenburg, the saga of Febold Feboldson transfers to the Great Plains such familiar tall tale motifs as the monster mosquitoes that drill through an iron boiler only to have their stingers clinched inside, the health-giving prairie wind that revives a corpse on its way to the graveyard, cutting and selling frozen post-holes, hitching an eagle-bee to a plow and plowing a bee-line for a boundary between Kansas and Nebraska.[2] In keeping with the modern sophisticated trend, the synthetic spirit of the gag and the wisecrack, also noticeable in oil-field Paul Bunyan anecdotes, pervades the humor of the Paul Bunyan of the Great Plains.

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[1] See Harold W. Fenton, *Pecos Bill* (1949).

[2] Paul R. Beath, *Febold Feboldson* (1948). See also *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 227-230.

## A MAN AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT A MAN

The logging fraternity of Paul Bunyan belongs to the days of industrial pioneering, before the timber beast became a timber mechanic. The generous camp boss and his loyal crew, working side by side, perpetuate the fluid, mobile labor conditions of the nomadic, feudal frontier, where workers dared and achieved the impossible and it seemed that there were no miracles that American ingenuity, skill, and strength could not perform. But Paul's genius for invention and his mania for mass production (e.g., the chain ax with four blades that, swung in a circle, cut four trees at once) could only lead to the triumph of the machine. As the coal miner said about the mining machine that threatened to displace the pick: "Only trouble is that a machine can pick coal faster than a man and when it ain't working it don't have to eat."

No wonder, then, when the first steam drill was introduced at the Big Bend Tunnel, the men did not take kindly to it and John Henry saw in it a test as well as competition—a test of his pride in his craft and manhood and his loyalty to his gang and his boss. The challenge of the machine and the conflict between hand and machine labor, replacing the struggle against the wilderness, wrought a change in the work epic and the concept of the work hero. No longer a boss, but a common worker, the tragic hero of endurance and duty succeeds the comic hero of audacity. To the strength and courage of the work giant he adds the idealism and fanaticism of the martyr.

In the days before steam and compressed-air drills, tunnels were blasted out of the rock with the aid of steel-drivers, who prepared holes for blasting by driving a steel drill with a ten-pound hammer. Out of stories of the heroic feats and contests of steel-drivers grew the legend of John Henry, who beat a steam-drill down and died, during the construction of the Big Bend Tunnel on the Chesapeake and Ohio

Railroad, in Summers County, West Virginia, between 1870 and 1872. As the tradition spread, John Henry, whether man or myth, grew in stature and prowess until he became the Negro Paul Bunyan and the greatest Negro folk figure and work hero—a symbol of man's martyr spirit in his stand against the machine.

> John Henry told his old captain,
> Said, "A man ain't nothin' but a man;
> Before I let your steel gang down
> I will die with the hammer in my hand. . . ."

Apart from his supreme act of heroic defiance and sacrifice, John Henry resembles the frontier strong man and boaster who is a star performer on the job and a hell-raiser off it—the subject of endless bragging contests among his admirers:

> "Why, man," said a true John Henryite on such an occasion, "John Henry could take that hammer between his teeth and drive with his hands tied and beat you like all git-out." "Yes, Lawd," affirmed another, "that man had a stroke like a Alabama mule." "They tells me," said a third, "that he used to keep six men runnin' just to carry his drills back and forth from the man that sharpened 'em."[1]

Supreme sacrifice in the line of duty has immortalized a flesh-and-blood hero, Casey Jones, and a mythical man of steel, Joe Magarac. It was said of Casey, as of many a daring and resourceful champion, that "He was either lucky, or else his judgment was as nearly perfect as human judgment can be." In the end his luck proved unequal to the "desperate chances" of early-day railroading, when the equipment itself—sidings and safety devices (it was before the days of automatic block signals)—was not equal to the pressure of maintaining schedules. But Casey's sense of duty and devotion to the engineer's tradition met the supreme test. The inscription on the monument erected to his memory in 1938, in his boyhood town of Cayce, Kentucky (whence his nickname), tells how he went to everlasting glory:

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[1] Guy B. Johnson, in *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 231.

> . . . On the morning of April 30th, 1900, while running the Illinois Central fast mail train No. 1 "The Cannon Ball," and by no fault of his, his engine bolted through three freight cars at Vaughan, Miss. Casey died with his hand clenched to the brake helve and his was the only life lost. . . . It can be truthfully said of him, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."[1]

Sim Webb, his fireman, says that as he jumped "Casey held down the whistle in a long, piercing scream." And when Casey's body was found in the wreckage, the broken end of the whistle cord was still clutched in his hand.

The saga of Joe Magarac, steel-mill Paul Bunyan and John Henry, begins and ends in a contest. In Hungarian and Slovak "magarac" means "jackass," and a "Joe Magarac," translated freely, means "one who just eatit and workit same lak jackass donkey." Steve Mestrovich, determined that his pretty daughter, Mary, should marry "only strongest mans what ever lived" and, tired of waiting, gave a big party at which he announced that the man who could lift the heaviest weight would be the lucky man. The winner, a seven-foot giant, introduced himself as Joe Magarac, born inside an ore mountain. When he pulled off his shirt, the people saw that he was a man of steel—"steel hands, steel body, steel everything." But he said he had no time for marriage, and withdrew in favor of Pete Pussick, on whom Mary was sweet. Joe went to live in Mrs. Horkey's boarding-house and to work both day and night shifts in the steel mill. He made rails by squeezing hot steel through his fingers—four rails from each hand—and he made so many of them that at last the roller-boss said that they would have to shut down from Thursday night till Monday morning. On Monday morning the melter-boss found Joe sitting in a ladle with the hot steel boiling up around his neck. Sick of shut-downs and having heard the big boss say that he wanted the best steel to build a new mill, Joe had decided to offer himself for that purpose. In this last contest, between himself and ore, to see which could make the better steel, Joe won again.

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[1] Reproduced by Fred J. Lee, *Casey Jones* (1939), following p. 298.

If Joe's saga recalls memories of foundation sacrifice rites and stories of men who have fallen into vats of molten steel and been buried with the metal,[1] it also suggests to class-conscious folk the symbolism that the mills belong to the men rather than the men to the mills.

> And the steel makers say that if a man works for a long time in the mills and does right by his fellow workers he will sometimes be able to see Joe sitting in the furnace, and that if you speak to him he will say "Hello." . . .
>
> And the steel men say that once when someone asked him who owned the mills he worked at he said, "We own the mills because we built them, and because we make steel that comes out of them."[2]

A similar "benevolent monomania" and missionary zeal—the spirit of self-abnegation combined with service—links the laboring strength of the steelman with the spiritual pioneering of "Johnny Appleseed," born John Chapman in Leominster, Massachusetts, in 1774. By one of those strange coincidences of history and folklore, he planted apple trees and Swedenborgian religion in the same Monongahela Valley that later blossomed in smoke and steel. During his long trek to Indiana, where he died in 1845, Johnny Appleseed touched the frontier at many points. And yet, as pioneer nurseryman and colporteur, friend of animals, children, and Indians, this St. Francis-like eccentric Yankee and "primitive Christian" was cast in the role of savior among wastrels, and was exceptional for "action that was creative and not sanguinary." In his democratic, humanitarian evangelical faith, as a "common man, working for the common good," he is as American as the rivers—the Susquehanna, the Monongahela, the Allegheny, the Muskingum, and the Ohio—along which he traveled to heaven "barefooted and clad in coarse raiment."

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[1] Cf. the poems, "A Strange Funeral in Braddock," by Michael Gold, and "Steel," by Joseph Auslander.

[2] J. Ernest Wright, Manuscripts of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Pennsylvania.

—B. A. B.

## Pipeline Days and Paul Bunyan

It was evening. The sun hung like a sandy ball above the rim of dull mesquite that surrounded the pipeline camp. For three weeks the line had been extending through a lifeless country of mesquite and dust. For three weeks the men had been broiling under the August sun with not even a wind to make the heat less deadening. Now they were sprawled on the grass in easy after-supper positions. Forming a half circle about the cook-shack, they rested uncomfortably and "razzed" the lone fat man who had not yet finished eating. "Fat" was always last—last to start work, last to stop eating, and certainly last to stop talking. "Fat" ate on, unconcerned with their tired humor. Gradually the men drifted into small groups and lay droning a preparation for the evening's talk.

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By Acel Garland. From *Foller de Drinkin' Gou'd*, Publications of the Texas

"Git a scoop. That's what you need, Fat."

"Move the chuck wagon and he'll starve to death. He's too damn lazy to follow it."

"Hey, Fat, did you ever get all you wanted to eat?"

"They ought to grow square beans so he could get more of them on his knife."

"Talk about eating. Tell you what I saw once," said one who aspired to Fat's position as the camp's chief liar. "I saw a man eat a whole ham once—well, not exactly a whole ham, we had eaten a meal off it—not exactly we, my brother-in-law Jim and his family. The man came to the house one morning and wanted something to eat. Sis was busy and didn't have no time to be fooling with him; so she just set the table and put this ham on it and then went on about her housework or whatever she was doing. Well, when she come back the man was gone and so was the ham—all except the bone and it had been gnawed so dry that even the dog wouldn't touch it. That's the God's truth. Jim swears it's the truth."

The men howled derisively, and Fat, who had been listening half attentively, arose from his stool and sauntered into the center of the group.

"Did you say something about eating?" he said. "Well, I had a funny thing happen to me the other day in Wichita Falls. I goes into one of them restaurants down by the railroad tracks to eat. When I come in I saw a couple of tough hombres setting at the counter and they looks me over kind of amused like. But I just goes on back and sets down a couple of seats from them. After a while the waiter comes out from behind and goes over to where they are setting and asks them what they want.

"They was sure tough-looking birds, and one of them speaks up and says, 'Gimme a T-bone steak a inch and a

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Folk-Lore Society, Number VII, edited by J. Frank Dobie, pp. 55-61. Copyright, 1928, by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Austin.

quarter thick. Just scorch it.' And he looks over at me kinda mean like.

"But I didn't pay him no mind but just set there. So the other one pulls his hat 'way down over his eye, and says, 'Gimme a hind quarter. Raw' And then they both looks over at me.

"Well, when the waiter come over to where I am setting, I says to him, 'Gimme a sharp butcher knife and then just cripple a steer and run him through here. I'll cut off what I want!' "

"Speaking of steers," the Contender put in, "did you ever hear about the cattle line that Paul Bunyan laid from his ranch to Chicago?

"Well, Paul he got tired of paying such high freight to get his stock to market; so he just laid a pipeline all the way to the stockyards in Chicago and pumped them through it. Everything went all right except that the pipe was so big that the calves and half-grown yearlin's would get lost in the threads and starve to death before they could get to the outside. And one time the line sprung a leak and Paul lost thirty-five carloads of cattle before he could get it corked [caulked]. But he sure did do a good job of corking when he did get to it."

"How the devil did he cork a hole that big?" asked Fat after a minute or two of silence.

"Why with B. S., you big windbag, same as that that you have been spouting off."

Fat sat for a moment trying to think of a way to get "back at" the Contender. Then he started off on a new trail.

"You know so much about Paul Bunyan," he said. "Did you ever hear about that big steer that he had? He called her Babe and she just measured forty-two pick-handles lengths and the width of a size seven derby hat between the eyes. And strong! Why that steer could pull anything!

"I remember one time when we was drilling a well down Breckenridge way. Wasn't much of a hole, just sixteen inches. Well, we drilled and drilled and didn't ever strike nothing—except dust, and a God's plenty of that; so finally Paul he said we might as well give it up as a dry hole and let it go at that.

"But Paul was mad! He swore around for two or three days and smashed the derrick into kindling wood and was about to quit drilling when he saw a advertisement in the paper by some bird out on the plains that wanted to buy some post-holes. Ten thousand post-holes it was he wanted. Ten thousand holes three feet long.

"Well, Paul he hitched a chain around this duster hole and hooked up Babe and pulled fifteen thousand feet of it out of the ground. He got mad again because the hole broke off and left over half of it in the ground. But directly he said that they wasn't no use of a post-hole being sixteen inches across; so he just quartered the hole and then sawed it up into the right lengths.

"You know out on the plains they have a awful hard time digging post-holes, or any other kind of holes for that matter. The soil out there is only about a foot deep till you strike solid rock and they can't dig through this rock a-tall.

"Why, them guys used to come down into East Texas and buy all the old wells and dug-outs that they could get a-hold of and cut them up to use for post-holes. I used to know a feller down there that could dig and stack on cars more old wells than any man I ever saw before. He could stack twenty-nine of them on cars in a day and take two hours off for dinner.

"They finally moved so many wells from down there that they ruined the water; so they was a ordinance passed against it. But that didn't stop it. They bootlegged them out to the plains. I knew one guy that got rich bootlegging them. He had a patented jack that would lift a well or a dug-out right out of the ground.

"It don't do much good to build fences out on the plains, though. That there wind out there is awful. Soon as a man gets a good fence built, along comes the wind and blows it away, posts, post-holes, and all. Why, that wind even blows wells away and a guy told me that he seen it turn prairie dog holes wrong side out it blew so hard. But I never did believe it. Them guys are awful liars. One of them told me he had a horse throw him so high one time that he had to catch a-holt of a cloud to keep from falling and killing himself. It's cold out there too——"

"I'll say it is," a pipeliner broke in. "Like that guy that was up in Canada somewheres when it was fifty degrees below. He come up to another guy and said, 'God, man, wouldn't you hate to be in Amarillo today?' "

"Ja ever hear about them wells out in Colorado where the oil freezes when it comes out of the ground?" asked the Contender. "They can't pipe it away; so they just let it spout out on the ground and then shovel it into wagons with scoops and haul it off."

"That's like some of them wells that Paul Bunyan drilled in over at Smackover," said someone. "They was gushers and blew in so strong that they had to put roofs over the derricks to keep the oil from spouting a hole in the sky."

"I worked for Paul out in Arizona on the biggest well that I ever worked on," resumed the Contender. "It was a seventy-five inch hole, it was, and we had to make a derrick so tall that it had to be hinged in two places and folded up before the sun and stars could pass. Took a man fourteen days to climb to the top of it. It did. And Paul had to hire thirty derrick men so we could have a man on top all of the time. They was always fourteen men going up and fourteen men coming down, a man on top and a man off tower,[1] all the time. And they was dog houses built a day's climbing apart for the men to sleep in while they was going up and down.

"Why, when that well blew in, it took three days for the oil to reach the top of the derrick, and it rained oil for a week after we had got it capped.

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[1] The reader may take his choice of spellings: "tower" or "tour." The word is pronounced "tower," and means a shift of men. The drilling crews work in

"It was some well. We drilled it with one of Paul's patented rotary rigs. Never could have drilled so deep—it was sixty thousand feet—if Paul hadn't used flexible drill pipe. We just wound the drill stem up on the draw-works. Take a devil of a long time to come out of the hole if we had had to stack it.

"Well, when we was down sixty thousand and three feet, the well blew in. And when we had come out of the hole we seen that we had forgot to case it. Well, Paul he called out both towers and made up the casing on the ground—about ten miles of seventy-five-inch casing—and then he just picked it up and dropped it down into place."

"I worked for Paul on one of them deep wells once," said Fat. "It was out in Arkansas. Jimmy Blue was running the rig and we was drilling with standard tools. We got down thirty thousand feet and struck a rock formation that a bit wouldn't touch. And we was using a pretty good sized bit too, drilling a fifty-inch hole.

"Well, we worked on this formation for three weeks without doing any good and then we called up Paul. Paul he come out there and took charge of the rig himself and worked for three more weeks, day and night, without doing anything except ruin a lot of bits. And finally he got so mad that he jumped down on the derrick floor and pulled up the bit with his hands. Then he threw it down into the hole as hard as he could throw it. Well, we busted the rock that time. The bit just kept on going and when the line run out it pulled derrick, rig, and all into the hole after it.

"We got a gusher that time. But when Paul seen that the rig had pulled Jimmy into the hole with it he was just about to plug off the hole and abandon it. But in a few days we got a telegram from Jimmy in China saying that he had a

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[1] Two towers of twelve hours each, from twelve o'clock to twelve. The tower that goes on at midnight is the "graveyard tower," the one that goes on at noon is the "gravy tower."—A. G.

100,000 barrel gusher and was spudding in on another location."

"Did any of you guys work for Paul on that big line he laid?" asked the Contender. "Well, I worked for him on that 101-inch aluminum line that he laid from Pennsylvania to California. We laid it to pipe buttermilk out to his camp out there. Paul liked buttermilk so well himself that he had a twenty-four-inch petcock running wide open all the time to catch enough for him to drink."

"Yeh," said Fat, "I know all about that. I helped Paul drill the buttermilk well that furnished that line. We drilled down thirty-two thousand feet and then struck a formation of cornbread. We drilled for five hundred feet through the cornbread and then for twelve hundred feet through solid turnip greens—except that every few feet would be a layer of fried sow-belly. That's where the old song started: 'Cornbread, Buttermilk, and Good Old Turnip Greens.' "

"Fat, did you ever see Paul's wife?" asked a young boll-weevil who had started to work only a few days before. "She had a wooden leg and she was so homely that we used to scrape enough ugly off her face every day to mud off a well. The hardest six months' work I ever put in was painting that wooden leg of hers."

"When Paul worked on the highlines he had a wooden leg himself," added an ex-linesman. "It was ninety feet long and the men used to wear one out every three days climbing up to bum him for cigarettes."

"Paul discovered perpetual motion—of the jaw—when he got Fat to work for him," said the Contender.

"Huh," said Fat, "only perpetual motion Paul ever discovered was one time down in India. We was drilling a ninety-inch hole with standard tools. And when we got down twenty-seven thousand feet we struck the root of a rubber tree and the bit never did stop bouncing. Had to abandon the hole."

"I worked—" the Contender began.

"Yeh, and on another one of them wells we was drilling a eighty-inch offset. Had them big derricks all around us. And our camp was setting so far back in them derricks that we had to pipe the daylight in. We drilled down nearly fifty thousand feet and struck a flowing vein of alum water and the hole, rig, and everything drew up until we had to abandon it."

"Paul sure had drilling down to a fine point," said the Contender. "Why I worked for him on one hole where we was using rubber tools. We would just start the tools bouncing and then go to sleep until it was time to change the bit. And the men was so fast that the driller would just bounce the bit out of the hole and they would change it before it could fall back."

"Paul's camps wasn't nothing like this dump," said Fat. "I worked for him on a ninety-inch line once and we had so many men in the camp that it took fifteen adding machines running day and night to keep track of their time. Paul invented the first ditching machine while we was laying this line through Arkansas. He bought a drove of them razorback hogs and trained them to root in a straight line."

"You telling about that cattle line of Paul's a while back reminds me of the trees that used to grow down on the Brazos," said the "Old Man." "One time I was working through that country with a herd of cattle and come up to the river where I couldn't ford it. While I was setting on my horse looking at the water I heard a big crash up the river and when I went up to see what it was, it was a tree had fallen across the river. It was one of them big holler trees. So I just drove my herd across the river through the holler of it. But when I got to the other side and counted the herd I seen that they was nearly three hundred steers missing and I went back to look for them. They had wandered off into the limbs and got lost."

"That reminds me of the sand storms that they used to have down in East Texas," said the Contender. "One time they was a nigger riding along one of them sandy roads on a jackass and he stopped to go down to the creek and get a drink and tied his mule to a sapling by the side of the road. While he was gone it come one of them sand storms and when he come back he seen his ass hanging by the tie-rope about seventy feet up in a tree. The sand had blown away from under him and just left him hanging there."

"Say," said Fat, "did any of you guys ever see Paul Bunyan in a poker game? The cards he used were so big that it took a man five hours to walk around one of them. Paul used to play a lot of poker that time we was digging Lake Michigan to mix concrete in when he was building the Rocky Mountains. A little while after that we dug Lake Superior for a slush pit for one of them big wells we was drilling. Any of you birds want to play some poker?"

This, from Fat, was the signal for retiring. The sun was long past set and mosquitoes were buzzing in the darkened mesquite. Silently the men stalked off toward their tents—all except two or three who followed Fat to his tent for a session at poker.

## The Saga of Pecos Bill

It is highly probable that Paul Bunyan, whose exploits were recounted in a number of *The Century Magazine*, and Pecos Bill, mythical cowboy hero of the Southwest, were blood brothers. At all events, they can meet on one common ground: they were both fathered by a liar.

Pecos Bill is not a newcomer in the Southwest. His mighty deeds have been sung for generations by the men of the range. In my boyhood days in west Texas I first heard of Bill, and in later years I have often listened to

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By Edward O'Reilly. From *The Century Magazine*, Vol. 106 (October, 1923, No. 6), pp. 827-833. Copyright, 1923, by The Century Co.

chapters of his history told around the chuck-wagon by gravely mendacious cowboys.

The stranger in cattle-land usually hears of Bill if he shows an incautious curiosity about the cow business. Some old-timer is sure to remark mournfully:

"Ranchin' ain't what it was in the days Bill staked out New Mexico."

If the visitor walks into the trap and inquires further about Bill, he is sure to receive an assortment of misinformation that every cow-hand delights in unloading on the unwary.

Although Bill has been quoted in a number of Western stories, the real history of his wondrous deeds has never been printed. I have here collected a few of the tales about him which will doubtless be familiar to cow-men, but deserve to be passed on to a larger audience.

Bill invented most of the things connected with the cow business. He was a mighty man of valor, the king killer of the bad men, and it was Bill who taught the broncho how to buck. It is a matter of record that he dug the Rio Grande one dry year when he grew tired of packin' water from the Gulf of Mexico.

According to the most veracious historians, Bill was born about the time Sam Houston discovered Texas. His mother was a sturdy pioneer woman who once killed forty-five Indians with a broom-handle, and weaned him on moonshine liquor when he was three days old. He cut his teeth on a bowie-knife, and his earliest playfellows were the bears and catamounts of east Texas.

When Bill was about a year old, another family moved into the country, and located about fifty miles down the river. His father decided the place was gettin' too crowded, and packed his family in a wagon and headed west.

One day after they crossed the Pecos River, Bill fell out of the wagon. As there were sixteen or seventeen other children in the family, his parents didn't miss him for four or five weeks, and then it was too late to try to find him.

That's how Bill came to grow up with the coyotes along the Pecos. He soon learned the coyote language, and used to hunt with them and sit on the hills and howl at night. Being so young when he got lost, he always thought he was a coyote. That's where he learned to kill deer by runnin' them to death.

One day when he was about ten years old a cow-boy came along just when Bill had matched a fight with two grizzly bears. Bill hugged the bears to death, tore off a hind leg, and was just settin' down to breakfast when this cow-boy loped up and asked him what he meant by runnin' around naked that way among the varmints.

"Why, because I am a varmint," Bill told him. "I'm a coyote."

The cow-boy argued with him that he was a human, but Bill wouldn't believe him.

"Ain't I got fleas?" he insisted. "And don't I howl around all night, like a respectable coyote should do?"

"That don't prove nothin'," the cow-boy answered. "All Texans have fleas, and most of them howl. Did you ever see a coyote that didn't have a tail? Well, you ain't got no tail; so that proves you ain't a varmint."

Bill looked, and, sure enough, he didn't have a tail.

"You sure got me out on a limb," says Bill. "I never noticed that before. It shows what higher education will do for a man. I believe you're right. Lead me to them humans, and I'll throw in with them."

Bill went to town with this cow-hand, and in due time he got to enjoyin' all the pleasant vices of mankind, and decided that he certainly was a human. He got to runnin' with the wild bunch, and sunk lower and lower, until finally he became a cow-boy.

It wasn't long until he was famous as a bad man. He invented the six-shooter and train-robbin' and most of the crimes popular in the old days of the West. He didn't in-went cow-stealin'. That was discovered by King David in the Bible, but Bill improved on it.

There is no way of tellin' just how many men Bill did kill. Deep down he had a tender heart, however, and never killed women or children, or tourists out of season. He never scalped his victims; he was too civilized for that. He used to skin them gently and tan their hides.

It wasn't long before Bill had killed all the bad men in west Texas, massacred all the Indians, and eat all the buffalo. So he decided to migrate to a new country where hard men still thrived and a man could pass the time away.

He saddled up his horse and hit for the West. One day he met an old trapper and told him what he was lookin' for.

"I want the hardest cow outfit in the world," he says. "Not one of these ordinary cow-stealin', Mexican-shootin' bunches of amateurs, but a real hard herd of hand-picked hellions that make murder a fine art and take some proper pride in their slaughter."

"Stranger, you're headed in the right direction," answers the trapper. "Keep right on down this draw for a couple of hundred miles, and you'll find that very outfit. They're so hard they can kick fire out of a flint rock with their bare toes."

Bill single-footed down that draw for about a hundred miles that afternoon; then he met with an accident. His horse stubbed his toe on a mountain and broke his leg, leavin' Bill afoot.

He slung his saddle over his shoulder and set off hikin' down that draw, cussin' and a-swearin'. Profanity was a gift with Bill.

All at once a big ten-foot rattlesnake quiled up in his path, set his tail to singin', and allowed he'd like to match a fight. Bill laid down his saddle, and just to be fair about it, he gave the snake the first three bites. Then he waded into that reptile and everlastingly frailed the pizen out of him.

By and by that old rattler yelled for mercy, and admitted that when it came to fightin', Bill started where he let off. So Bill picked up his saddle and started on, carryin' the snake in his hand and spinnin' it in short loops at the Gila monsters.

About fifty miles further on, a big old mountain-lion jumped off a cliff and lit all spraddled out on Bill's neck. This was no ordinary lion. It weighed more than three steers and a yearlin', and was the very same lion the State of Nuevo León was named after down in old Mexico.

Kind of chucklin' to himself, Bill laid down his saddle and his snake and went into action. In a minute the fur was flyin' down the cañon until it darkened the sun. The way Bill knocked the animosity out of that lion was a shame. In about three minutes that lion hollered:

"I'll give up, Bill. Can't you take a joke?"

Bill let him up, and then he cinched the saddle on him and went down that cañon whoopin' and yellin', ridin' that lion a hundred feet at a jump, and quirtin' him down the flank with the rattlesnake.

It wasn't long before he saw a chuck-wagon with a bunch of cow-boys squattin' around it. He rode up to that wagon, splittin' the air with his war-whoops, with that old lion a-screechin', and that snake singin' his rattles.

When he came to the fire he grabbed the old cougar by the ear, jerked him back on his haunches, stepped off him, hung his snake around his neck, and looked the outfit over. Them cow-boys sat there sayin' less than nothin'.

Bill was hungry, and seein' a boilerful of beans cookin' on the fire, he scooped up a few handfuls and swallowed them, washin' them down with a few gallons of boilin' coffee out of the pot. Wipin' his mouth on a handful of prickly-pear cactus, Bill turned to the cow-boys and asked:

"Who the hell is boss around here?"

A big fellow about eight feet tall, with seven pistols and nine bowie-knives in his belt, rose up and, takin' off his hat, said:

"Stranger, I was; but you be."

Bill had many adventures with this outfit. It was about this time he staked out New Mexico, and used Arizona for a calf-pasture. It was here that he found his noted horse Widow-Maker. He raised him from a colt on nitroglycerin and dynamite, and Bill was the only man that could throw a leg over him.

There wasn't anythin' that Bill couldn't ride, although I have heard of one occasion when he was thrown. He made a bet that he could ride an Oklahoma cyclone slick-heeled, without a saddle.

He met the cyclone, the worst that was ever known, up on the Kansas line. Bill eared that tornado down and climbed on its back. That cyclone did some pitchin' that is unbelievable, if it were not vouched for by many reliable witnesses.

Down across Texas it went sunfishin', back-flippin', sidewindin', knockin' down mountains, blowin' the holes out of the ground, and tyin' rivers into knots. The Staked Plains used to be heavily timbered until that big wind swiped the trees off and left it a bare prairie.

Bill just sat up there, thumbin' that cyclone in the withers, floppin' it across the ears with his hat, and rollin' a cigarette with one hand. He rode it through three States, but over in Arizona it got him.

When it saw it couldn't throw him, it rained out from under him. This is proved by the fact that it washed out the Grand Cañon. Bill came down over in California. The spot where he lit is now known as Death Valley, a hole in the ground more than one hundred feet below sea-level, and the print of his hip-pockets can still be seen in the granite.

I have heard this story disputed in some of its details. Some historians claim that Bill wasn't thrown; that he slid down on a streak of lightnin' without knockin' the ashes off his cigarette. It is also claimed that the Grand Cañon was dug by Bill one week when he went prospectin'; but the best authorities insist on the first version. They argue that that streak of lightnin' story comes from the habit he always had of usin' one to light his cigarette.

Bill was a great roper. In fact, he invented ropin'. Old-timers who admit they knew him say that his rope was as long as the equator, although the more conservative say that it was at least two feet shorter on one end. He used to rope a herd of cattle at one throw.

This skill once saved the life of a friend. The friend had tried to ride Widow-Maker one day, and was thrown so high he came down on top of Pike's Peak. He was in the middle of a bad fix, because he couldn't get down, and seemed doomed to a lingerin' death on high.

Bill came to the rescue, and usin' only a short calf-loop, he roped his friend around the neck and jerked him down to safety in the valley, twenty thousand feet below. This man was always grateful, and became Bill's horse-wrangler at the time he staked out New Mexico.

In his idle moments in New Mexico Bill amused himself puttin' thorns on the trees and horns on the toads. It was on this ranch he dug the Rio Grande and invented the centipede and the tarantula as a joke on his friends.

When the cow business was dull, Pecos Bill occasionally embarked in other ventures; for instance, at one time he took a contract to supply the S. P. Railroad with wood. He hired a few hundred Mexicans to chop and haul the wood to the railroad line. As pay for the job, Bill gave each Mexican one fourth of the wood he hauled.

These Mexicans are funny people. After they received their share of the wood they didn't know what to do with it; so Bill took it off their hands and never charged them a cent.

On another occasion Bill took the job of buildin' the line fence that forms the boundary from El Paso across to the Pacific. He rounded up a herd of prairie-dogs and set them to dig holes, which by nature a prairie-dog likes to do.

Whenever one of them finished a nice hole and settled down to live in it, Bill evicted him and stuck a fence-post in the hole. Everybody admired his foresight except the prairie-dogs, and who cares what a prairie-dog thinks?

Old Bill was always a very truthful man. To prove this, the cow-boys repeat one of his stories, which Bill claimed happened to him. Nobody ever disputed him; that is, no one who is alive now.

He threw in with a bunch of Kiowa Indians one time on a little huntin'-trip. It was about the time the buffalo were getting scarce, and Bill was huntin' with his famous squatter-hound named Norther.

Norther would run down a buffalo and hold him by the ear until Bill came up and skinned him alive. Then he would turn it loose to grow a new hide. The scheme worked all right in the summer, but in the winter most of them caught colds and died.

The stories of Bill's love-affairs are especially numerous. One of them may be told. It is the sad tale of the fate of his bride, a winsome little maiden called Slue-Foot Sue. She was a famous rider herself, and Bill lost his heart when he saw her riding a catfish down the Rio Grande with only a surcingle. You must remember that the catfish in the Rio Grande are bigger than whales and twice as active.

Sue made a sad mistake, however, when she insisted on ridin' Widow-Maker on her weddin'-day. The old horse threw her so high she had to duck her head to let the moon go by. Unfortunately, she was wearin' her weddin'-gown, and in those days the women wore those big steel-spring bustles.

Well, when Sue lit, she naturally bounced, and every time she came down she bounced again. It was an awful sad sight to see Bill implorin' her to quit her bouncin' and not be so nervous; but Sue kept right on, up and down, weepin', and throwin' kisses to her distracted lover, and carryin' on as a bride naturally would do under those circumstances.

She bounced for three days and four nights, and Bill finally had to shoot her to keep her from starvin' to death. It was mighty tragic. Bill never got over it. Of course he married lots of women after that. In fact, it was one of his weaknesses; but none of them filled the place in his heart once held by Slue-Foot Sue, his bouncin' bride.

There is a great difference of opinion as to the manner of Bill's demise. Many claim that it was his drinkin' habits that killed him. You see, Bill got so that liquor didn't have any kick for him, and he fell into the habit of drinkin' strychnine and other forms of wolf pizen.

Even the wolf bait lost its effect, and he got to puttin' fish-hooks and barbed wire in his toddy. It was the barbed wire that finally killed him. It rusted his interior and gave him indigestion. He wasted away to a mere skeleton, weighin' not more than two tons; then up and died, and went to his infernal reward.

Many of the border bards who knew Pecos Bill at his best have a different account of his death.

They say that he met a man from Boston one day, wearing a mail-order cow-boy outfit, and askin' fool questions about the West; and poor old Bill laid down and laughed himself to death.

## John Henry

### THE CONTEST WITH THE STEAM DRILL

John Henry drove steel with a ten pound sheep-nose hammer with a regular size switch handle four feet long. This handle was made slim from where the hammer fitted on to a few inches back, where it reduced to one-half inch in thickness, the width being five-eighths in this slim part. It was kept greased with tallow to keep it limber and flexible, so as not to jar the hands and arms.

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From *John Henry, A Folk-Lore Study* by Louis W. Chappell, pp. 22-23, 32-33. Jena: Frommannsche Verlag, Walter Biedermann. 1933.

He would stand from five and one half feet to six feet from his steel and strike with full length of his hammer. The handle was so limber that when it was held out straight the hammer would hang nearly half way down. He drove steel from his left shoulder and would make a stroke of more than nineteen and one half feet spending his power with all his might making the hammer travel with the speed of lightning. He would throw his hammer over his shoulder and nearly the full length of the handle would be down his back with the-hammer against his legs just below his knees. He would drive ten long hours with never a turning stroke.

. . . John Henry could stand on two powder cans and drive a drill straight up equally as fast as he could drive it straight down—with the same long sweep and rapidity of the hammer. He could stand on a powder can with two feet together, toes even and drive all day never missing a stroke. He was the steel driving champion of the country and his record has never been equalled.[1]

* * * * *

John Henry was the best driver on the C. & O. He was the only man that could drive steel with two hammers, one in each hand. People came from miles to see him use the two 20 lb. hammers he had to drive with.

It seems that two different contracting companies were meeting in what is called Big Bend Tunnel. One had a steam drill while the other used man power to drill with. When they met everyone claimed that the steam drill was the greatest of all inventions, but John Henry made the remark he could sink more steel than the steam drill could. The contest was arranged and the money put up. John Henry was to get $100.00 to beat the steam drill.

John Henry had his foreman to buy him 2 new 20 lb. hammers for the race. They were to drill 35 minutes. When the contest was over John Henry had drilled two holes 7 feet deep, which made him a total of 14 feet. The steam drill drilled one hole 9 feet, which of course gave the prize to John.

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[1] Newton Redwine, *The Beattyville Enterprise*, Beattyville, Ky., Feb. 1, 1929.

When the race was over John Henry retired to his home and told his wife that he had a queer feeling in his head. She prepared his supper and immediately after eating he went to bed. The next morning when his wife awoke and told him it was time to get up she received no answer, and she immediately discovered that he had passed to the other world some time in the night. His body was examined by two Drs. from Baltimore and it was found his death was caused from a bursted blood vessel in his head.

The information I have given you came to me through my grandfather. He was present at Big Bend Tunnel when the contest was staged; at that time he was time keeper for the crew that John Henry was working with. I have often heard him say that his watch started and stopped the race. There was present all of the R. R. officials of the C. & O. The crowd that remained through the race at the mouth of the tunnel was estimated at 2500, a large crowd for pioneer days.

John Henry was born in Tenn. and at the time of his death he was 34 years old. He was a man weighing from 200 to 225 lbs. He was a full-blooded Negro, his father having come from Africa. He often said his strength was brought from Africa. He was not any relation of John Hardy as far as I know. . . .[1]

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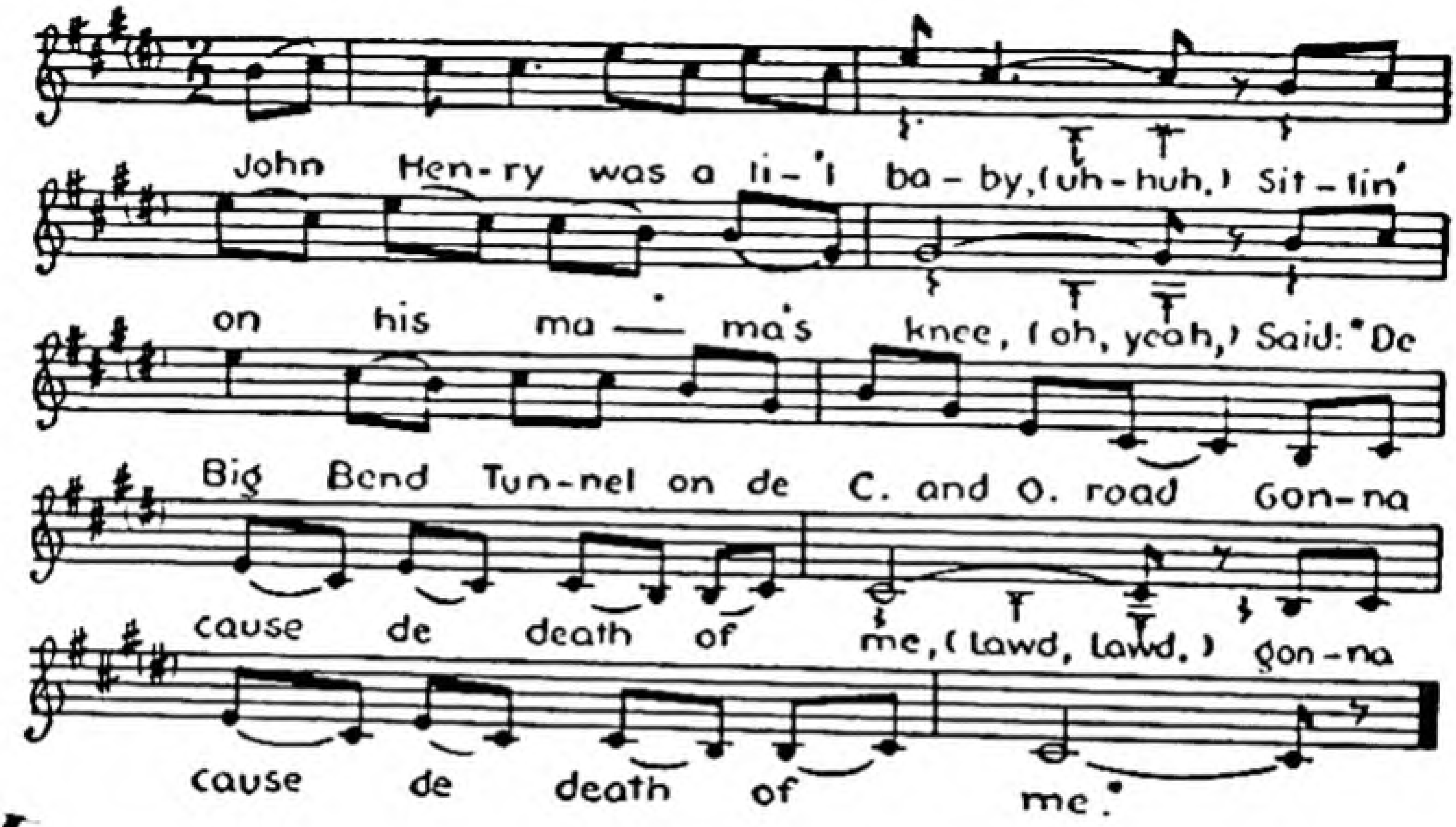
[1] George Johnston, Lindside, W. Va.

Considerable verisimilitude hardly characterizes all these details. The presence of all the officials of the road, with a crowd of 2,500, at the drilling-contest had better be accepted as fictional embroidery. But the purpose of this study is not to emphasize the tissue of falsehood in popular reports. Big Bend Tunnel was built by a single contractor, as will be shown later, but the "two different contracting companies" may well represent two crews of workmen. The steel driver may have had "2 new 20 lb. hammers" and used only one at a time. Two doctors from Baltimore may have examined Henry's body, but that they came to the tunnel for that purpose seems impossible of belief. His John Henry suggests the frontier strong man, who does impossible things.—L. W. C.

## THE JOHN HENRY SONG


John Hen-ry was a li-'l ba-by, (uh-huh,) Sit-tin'
on his ma — ma's knee, (oh, yeah,) Said: "De
Big Bend Tun-nel on de C. and O. road Gon-na
cause de death of me, (Lawd, Lawd,) gon-na
cause de death of me."

John Henry was a li'l baby, uh-huh,[1]
Sittin' on his mama's knee, oh, yeah,
Said: "De Big Bend Tunnel on de C. & O. road
Gonna cause de death of me,
Lawd, Lawd, gonna cause de death of me."

John Henry, he had a woman,
Her name was Mary Magdalene,
She would go to de tunnel and sing for John,
Jes' to hear John Henry's hammer ring,
Lawd, Lawd, jes' to hear John Henry's hammer ring.

John Henry had a li'l woman,
Her name was Lucy Ann,

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From *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, collected and compiled by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, pp. 5-9. Copyright, 1934, by the Macmillan Company. New York.

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[1] The syllables "uh-huh" and "oh, yeah," are to be repeated in each stanza.—J. A. L. and A. L.

John Henry took sick an' had to go to bed,
Lucy Ann drove steel like a man,
Lawd, Lawd, Lucy Ann drove steel like a man.

Cap'n says to John Henry,
"Gonna bring me a steam drill 'round,
Gonna take dat steam drill out on de job,
Gonna whop dat steel on down,
Lawd, Lawd, gonna whop dat steel on down."

John Henry tol' his cap'n,
Lightnin' was in his eye:
"Cap'n, bet yo' las' red cent on me,
Fo' I'll beat it to de bottom or I'll die,
Lawd, Lawd, I'll beat it to de bottom or I'll die."

Sun shine hot an' burnin',
Wer'n't no breeze a-tall,
Sweat ran down like water down a hill,
Dat day John Henry let his hammer fall,
Lawd, Lawd, dat day John Henry let his hammer fall.

John Henry went to de tunnel,
An' dey put him in de lead to drive;
De rock so tall an' John Henry so small,
Dat he lied down his hammer an' he cried,
Lawd, Lawd, dat he lied down his hammer an' he cried.

John Henry started on de right hand,
De steam drill started on de lef'—
"Before I'd let dis steam drill beat me down,
I'd hammer my fool self to death,
Lawd, Lawd, I'd hammer my fool self to death."

White man tol' John Henry,
"Nigger, damn yo' soul,
You might beat dis steam an' drill of mine,
When de rocks in dis mountain turn to gol',
Lawd, Lawd, when de rocks in dis mountain turn to gol'."

John Henry said to his shaker,
"Nigger, why don' you sing?
I'm throwin' twelve poun's from my hips on down,
Jes' listen to de col' steel ring,
Lawd, Lawd, jes' listen to de col' steel ring."

Oh, de captain said to John Henry,
"I b'lieve this mountain's sinkin' in."
John Henry said to his captain, "Oh my!
Ain' nothin' but my hammer suckin' win',
Lawd, Lawd, ain' nothin' but my hammer suckin' win'."

John Henry tol' his shaker,
"Shaker, you better pray,
For, if I miss dis six-foot steel,
Tomorrow'll be yo' buryin' day,
Lawd, Lawd, tomorrow'll be yo' buryin' day."

John Henry tol' his captain,
"Looka yonder what I see—
Yo' drill's done broke an' yo' hole's done choke,
An' you cain' drive steel like me,
Lawd, Lawd, an' you cain' drive steel like me."

De man dat invented de steam drill,
Thought he was mighty fine.
John Henry drove his fifteen feet,
An' de steam drill only made nine,
Lawd, Lawd, an' de steam drill only made nine.

De hammer dat John Henry swung
It weighed over nine pound;
He broke a rib in his lef'-han' side,
An' his intrels fell on de groun',
Lawd, Lawd, an' his intrels fell on de groun'.

John Henry was hammerin' on de mountain,
An' his hammer was strikin' fire,

He drove so hard till he broke his pore heart,
An' he lied down his hammer an' he died,
Lawd, Lawd, he lied down his hammer an' he died.

All de womens in de Wes',
When dey heared of John Henry's death,
Stood in de rain, flagged de eas'-boun' train,
Goin' where John Henry fell dead,
Lawd, Lawd, goin' where John Henry fell dead.

John Henry's li'l mother,
She was all dressed in red,
She jumped in bed, covered up her head,
Said she didn' know her son was dead,
Lawd, Lawd, didn' know her son was dead.

John Henry had a pretty li'l woman,
An' de dress she wo' was blue,
An' de las' words she said to him:
"John Henry, I've been true to you,
Lawd, Lawd, John Henry, I've been true to you."

## Casey Jones

### A BRAVE ENGINEER

### I[1]

On the last day of April [1928] occurs the 28th anniversary of the death of Casey Jones—probably the most famous of a long line of locomotive engineer heroes who have died at their post of duty, one hand on the whistle and the other on the airbrake lever. Casey Jones' fame rests on a series of nondescript verses, which can hardly be called poetry. They were written by Wallace Saunders, a Negro engine wiper who had been a close friend of the famous engineer, and who sang them to a jigging melody all his own.

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[1] From *Erie Railroad Magazine*, Vol. 24 (April, 1928), No. 2, pp. 13, 44.

Mrs. Casey Jones still lives in Jackson, Tenn. She has two sons and a daughter. Charles Jones, her younger son, lives in Jackson; Lloyd, the older son, is with a Memphis auto agency; and her daughter, Mrs. George McKenzie, lives at Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Although 41 years have flitted by since Miss Janie Brady said "I do" and became the bride of John Luther (Casey) Jones, Mrs. Jones still keeps green the memory of that glad occasion. Today, still on the sunny side of 60, the plump blond woman with her cheery smile tells graphically the story of how her husband was killed, and how Wallace Saunders composed the original air and words that later swept the country for years as the epic ballad of the railroader.

"My husband's real name was John Luther Jones," she told her latest interviewer. "He was a lovable lad—6 feet 4½ inches in height, dark-haired and gray-eyed. Always he was in good humor and his Irish heart was as big as his body. All the railroaders were fond of Casey, and his wiper, Wallace Saunders, just worshipped the ground he walked on."

The interviewer asked Mrs. Jones how her husband got the nickname Casey.

"Oh, I supposed everyone knew that!" she replied. "He got it from the town of Cayce, Kentucky, near which he was born. The name of the town is locally pronounced in two syllables, exactly like 'Casey.' "

Mrs. Jones remembers Wallace Saunders very well, although she has not seen him for years.

"Wallace's admiration for Casey was little short of idolatry," she said. "He used to brag mightily about Mr. Jones even when Casey was only a freight engineer."

Casey Jones was known far and wide among railroad men, for his peculiar skill with a locomotive whistle.

"You see," said Mrs. Jones, "he established a sort of trademark for himself by his inimitable method of blowing a whistle. It was a kind of long-drawn-out note that he created, beginning softly, then rising, then dying away almost to a whisper. People living along the Illinois Central right of way between Jackson and Water Valley would turn over in their beds late at night and say: 'There goes Casey Jones,' as he roared by."

After he had put in several years as freight and passenger engineer between Jackson and Water Valley, Casey was transferred early in 1900 to the Memphis-Canton (Miss.) run as throttle-puller of the Illinois Central's crack "Cannonball" train.

Casey and his fireman, Sim Webb, rolled into Memphis from Canton about 10 o'clock Sunday night, April 29. They went to the checking-in office and were preparing to go to their homes when Casey heard somebody call out: "Joe Lewis has just been taken with cramps and can't take his train out tonight."

"I'll double back and pull Lewis' old No. 638," Casey volunteered.

At 11 o'clock that rainy Sunday night Casey and Sim Webb clambered aboard the big engine and eased her out of the station and through the South Memphis yards.

> "All the switchmen knew by the engine's moans
> That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones."

Four o'clock of the 30th of April. The little town of Vaughan, Miss. A long, winding curve just above the town, and a long sidetrack beginning about where the curve ended.

"There's a freight train on the siding," Casey yelled across to Sim Webb.

Knowing the siding there was a long one, and having passed many other freights on it, Casey figured he would do the same this night.

But there were two separate sections of a very long train on the sidetrack this night. And the rear one was a little too long to get all its length off the main line onto the siding. The freight train crews figured on "sawing by"; that is as soon as the passenger train passed the front part of the first train, it would move forward and the rear freight would move up, thus clearing the main track.

But Casey's speed—about fifty miles an hour—was more than the freight crews bargained for.

But when old 638 was within a hundred feet of the end of the siding the horrified eyes of Casey Jones and Sim Webb beheld through the gloom the looming shape of several boxcars in motion, swinging across from the main line to the sidetrack. In a flash both knew there was no earthly way of preventing a smashup.

"Jump, Sim, and save yourself!" was Casey's last order to his fireman. As for himself, Casey threw his engine in reverse and applied the airbrakes—all any engineer could do, and rode roaring 638 into a holocaust of crashing wood that splintered like match boxes. Sim Webb jumped, fell into some bushes and was not injured.

When they took Casey's body from the wreckage (old 638 had plowed through the cars and caboose and turned over on her side a short distance beyond) they found one hand on the whistle cord, the other on the airbrake lever.

"I remember," Sim Webb told Casey's widow, "that as I jumped Casey held down the whistle in a long, piercing scream. I think he must have had in mind to warn the freight conductor in the caboose so he could jump."

Probably no individual, excepting a member of Casey's family, was more affected by the sad news than Wallace Saunders.

A few days later he was going about singing a song to a melody all his own. The air had a lilt that caught the fancy of everyone who heard it. But Wallace, honest old soul, had no idea of doing more than singing it as a sort of tribute to his white friend's memory.

But one day a song writer passed through Jackson and heard the song and the details of Casey's tragic death. He went off and changed the words, but retained the lilting refrain and the name of Casey Jones. That was about 1902.

## II[1]

There are many railroad men still living who knew and worked with Jones. The affection he aroused among all his acquaintances seems to have been an outstanding characteristic. He was 6 feet 4½ inches tall, dark-haired and gray-eyed. . . .

His old friend R. E. Edrington, a fellow engineer on the Illinois Central, writes: "The reputation which Casey enjoyed was richly earned by numerous feats of resourcefulness, skill and downright daring. He could perform feats with his famous 638 that no other engineer could equal with locomotives of the same class, or even with the same engine. Firing for him was a back-breaking and hair-raising job, but his mulatto fireman, Sim Webb, was equal to every demand, and held Casey in almost idolatrous regard, following him from one run to another through his entire career."

A. J. ("Fatty") Thomas, who often ran as conductor on trains pulled by Casey and the 638, writes: "I had often heard the song about Casey Jones, but on account of the phrases in it about the Southern Pacific and the Sante Fe, rounder, Frisco, and 'another papa on the Salt Lake Line,' I never figured that the song was intended for my Illinois Central Casey. For he was not a rounder but a car roller, and in my estimation the prince of them all. We had a number of fast men, and since then I have had hundreds of good engineers pull me on different western roads. But I never met the equal of Casey Jones in rustling to get over the road.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 28 (April, 1932), No. 2, pp. 12, 46.

"The 'whistle's moan' in the song is right. Casey could just about play a tune on the whistle. He could make the cold chills run up your back with it, and grin all the time. Everybody along the line knew Casey Jones' whistle.

"I never saw him with his mouth closed—he always had a smile or a broad grin. The faster he could get his engine to roll, the happier he was. He would lean out of the cab window to watch his drivers, and when he got her going so fast that the side rods looked solid, he would look at you and grin all over, happy as a boy with his first pair of red boots. Yet he had a reputation as a safe engineer. With all his fast running I never knew of him piling them up, of any but a few derailments and never a rear-ender. He was either lucky, or else his judgment was as nearly perfect as human judgment can be."

Ed Pacey, another conductor who knew Casey Jones, writes: "In the early days of railroading there was a real glamor to the rails. Into this setting Casey, engineer of the Cannonball Express, fitted perfectly. He was a giant and came of a great railroad family. His nickname was derived from his native village, Cayce, Tenn., pronounced 'Casey.'

"Jones was famous for two things: he was a teetotaler in days when abstinence was rare, and he was the most daring of all engineers in the days when schedules were simply 'get her there and make the time, or come to the office and get your time.'"

Mr. Pacey lodges a protest against the popular song's line to the effect that Casey Jones' widow informed her orphaned children that "you've got another papa on the Salt Lake line." Mr. Pacey chafes at the implied disrespect toward Mrs. Jones in that stanza. "There never was any other papa on the Salt Lake or any other line," he says. "Instead, the widow devoted her life to the hard struggle to maintain herself and educate her three children."

The common story of the wreck in which Jones was killed is that Casey had to meet two freight trains which were too long to clear the siding. For some reason, never clearly explained, Casey failed to stop and he piled them up when he struck the caboose and cars protruding out on the main line.

According to R. E. Edrington, however, the situation was even more complicated. "It was characteristic," he says, "of the desperate chances which were part of the period of railroading, when the engines were rapidly growing in size and the sidings, safety equipment and other appliances not keeping pace with them.

"There were not two but three trains. Two of these were north bound and had pulled into the siding. The third was racing, on short time, ahead of the Cannonball. As this train scurried down to the siding it dropped off a flagman but, after it had pulled down, this flagman rode in with the idea that the mother train would protest against the Cannonball.

"But the other train crew thought that he was still out and did not flag. So Casey came down, as fast as he could turn a wheel, with the result of one of the worst wrecks in the history of the road. . . ."

## THE "CASEY JONES" SONG

Four years ago the Erie Railroad Magazine gathered up the real story of Casey's life and death, as told by his widow, who still lives in Jackson, Tenn. The article was reprinted in railroad magazines and newspapers all over the world and has brought a continuous stream of letters ever since.

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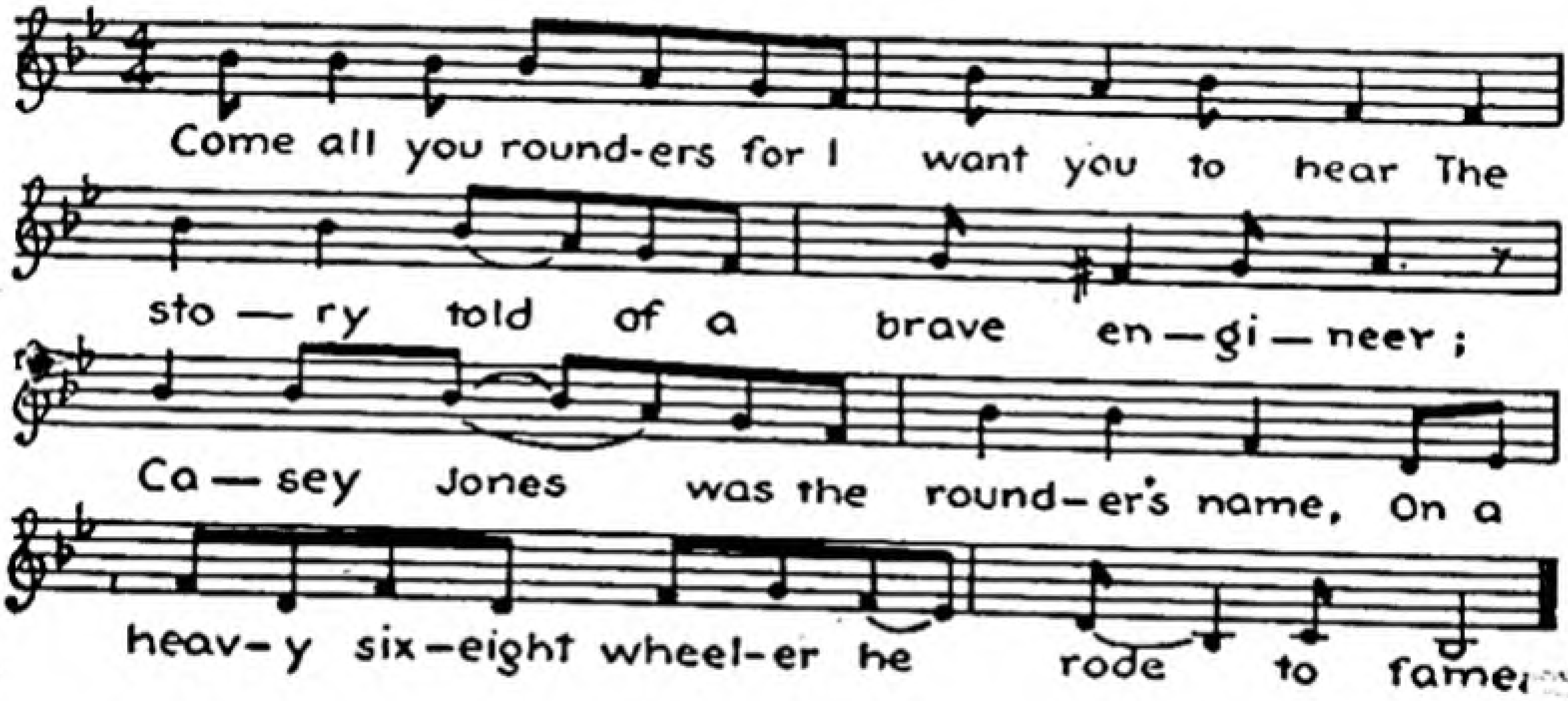
*Erie Railroad Magazine*, Vol. 28 (April, 1932), No. 2, p. 12. The present text (*ibid.*, Vol. 24, April, 1928, No. 2, p. 12), like the tune, is traditional, differing from the popular song version principally in the absence of the chorus. Copy-

Scores of correspondents have sent in various versions of the Casey Jones song, not only in English but in French, German and even in the language of the native laborers on the South African railways.

Every branch of railroading has at least one version of the song. The hobo jungles and the I.W.W. song books contribute others. Still others come from the campfires and boarding cars of construction gangs, and several weird and often unprintable variations were composed by doughboys in France during the world war.


Come all you round-ers for I want you to hear The
sto — ry told of a brave en — gi — neer;
Ca — sey Jones was the round-er's name, On a
heav-y six-eight wheel-er he rode to fame.

Come all you rounders for I want you to hear
The story told of a brave engineer;
Casey Jones was the rounder's name
On a heavy six-eight wheeler he rode to fame.

Caller called Jones about half-past four,
Jones kissed his wife at the station door,
Climbed into the cab with the orders in his hand,
Says, "This is my trip to the promised land."

Through South Memphis yards on the fly,
He heard the fireman say, "You've got a white-eye,"

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All the switchmen knew by the engine's moans,
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

It had been raining for more than a week,
The railroad track was like the bed of a creek.
They rated him down to a thirty mile gait,
Threw the south-bound mail about eight hours late.

Fireman says, "Casey, you're runnin' too fast,
You run the block signal the last station you passed."
Jones says, "Yes, I think we can make it though,
For she steams much better than ever I know."

Jones says, "Fireman, don't you fret,
Keep knockin' at the firedoor, don't give up yet;
I'm goin' to run her till she leaves the rail
Or make it on time with the south-bound mail."

Around the curve and a-down the dump
Two locomotives were a-bound to bump.
Fireman hollered, "Jones, it's just ahead,
We might jump and make it but we'll all be dead."

'Twas around this curve he saw a passenger train;
Something happened in Casey's brain;
Fireman jumped off, but Casey stayed on,
He's a good engineer but he's dead and gone—

Poor Casey was always all right,
He stuck to his post both day and night;
They loved to hear the whistle of old Number Three
As he came into Memphis on the old K.C.

Headaches and heartaches and all kinds of pain
Are not apart from a railroad train;
Tales that are earnest, noble and gran'
Belong to the life of a railroad man.

## The Saga of Joe Magarac: Steelman

While working in the steel mills along the Monongahela valley of Pennsylvania, I often heard one of the many Slavs who worked in the mills call one of his fellow-workers "*magarac*." Knowing that literally translated the word *magarac* meant jackass, but knowing also, from the tone of voice and the manner in which it was used, that it was seldom used derisively, I questioned my Hunkie leverman as to its meaning as understood by the Hunkie workers. He gave me a vivid explanation. He said:

"Magarac! Dat is mans who is joost same lak jackass donkey. Dat is mans what joost lak eatit and workit, dats all."

Pointing a finger toward another of his race, a huge Hunkie by the name of Mike, who was walking from the open hearth, he yelled:

"Hay! Magarac!"

At once, Mike's thumbs went to his ears, and with palms outspread his hands waved back and forth while he brayed lustily in the best imitation of a donkey that he could give.

"See," my leverman said, "dere is *magarac*. Dat is Joe Magarac for sure."

Then they both laughed and spoke in their mother tongue, which I did not understand.

It was evident enough there was some definite reason for the use of the word, and obviously that reason was, to their way of thinking, very humorous.

By working for a considerable number of years with a Hunkie on my either side, by sitting many evenings in their homes, and, since turning my thoughts to writing, by spending a good deal of my time with them, I have been fortunate enough to hear considerably more about Mr. Joe Magarac.

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By Owen Francis. From *Scribner's Magazine*, Vol. XC (November, 1931). No. 5, pp. 505-511. Copyright, 1931, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

I find that Joe Magarac is a man living only in the imagination of the Hunkie steel-mill worker. He is to the Hunkie what Paul Bunyan is to the woodsman and Old Stormalong is to the men of the sea. With his active imagination and his childlike delight in tales of greatness, the Hunkie has created stories with Joe Magarac as the hero that may in the future become folklore of our country. Conceived in the minds of Hunkie steel-mill workers, he belongs to the mills as do the furnaces and the rolling-mills. Although the stories of Joe Magarac are sagas, they have no tangible connection so far as I have been able to find, with the folklore of any of the countries which sent the Hunkie to these United States. It seems that the Hunkie, with the same adaptability that has made him into the best worker within our shores, has created a character and has woven about him a legend which admirably fits the environment in which he, the Hunkie, has been placed. Basically, the stories of Joe Magarac are as much a part of the American scene as steel itself.

I did not hear the story, which I have set down here as accurately as I have been able, at one time. Some of it I heard in the mill; some of it while sitting on the hill above the mill on pleasant Sunday afternoons; the most of it while sitting in Agnes's kitchen with Hunkie friends at my side and well-filled tin cups of prune-jack before us.

The saga of Joe Magarac is more typical of the Hunkie than any tale or incident or description I might write. It shows his sense of humor, his ambitions, his love of his work, and, in general, shows what I know the Hunkie to be: a good-natured, peace- and home-loving worker.

One time long time ago mebbe one, two hundred years, dere was living by Hunkietown, Steve Mestrovich. Steve he workit by open-hearth and he have daughter Mary. Oh, my, Mary was pretty girls: she have big, blue eyes, hairs yellow lak hot steel, hands so little lak lady, and big strong teeths.

She was prettier as Hunkie girls from any place and all fellows what workit for mill comit around and say for Steve:

"Mebbe pretty soon now be plenty good ting Mary gone catch hoosband."

Den Steve he always laughit and he say:

"Gone on home little mans. Mary no gone marry some one lak you who not catch much steam dis time. Mary gone marry only strongest mans what ever lived, ya betcha."

Mary say nothing. She joost sit around and hope dat pretty soon mans who be all right comit, for she was seventeen year old already and she no lak dat business of wait around. Steve get sick too from wait around and nobody comit. Steve say:

"What the hells kind business is dat. I catch best young girls as anybody: she pretty lak hell, she wanit mans, she wanit be good for mans and joost stay home and raise kids and no say nothing, dats all. And, by Gods, I catch two hundred dollar I give myself for wedding present and I no find mans for her. By Gods, I tink gone have party dis time and ask everybody comit and den we see who is best mans for Mary, ya damn right.

"So, Old Womans, next Sunday we gone have party. You makit plenty prune-jack and I gone to Pittsburgh and gone have two barrel beer sent out on truck."

Well, Steve's old lady she makit plenty prune-jack and all week she workit makit cake and Mary she help and she was glad lak anyting because Sunday gone be party and she tink mebbe she gone catch mans lak 'nother Hunkie girls who have mans who workit in mills. Steve tell everybody what gone be on Sunday and all dem young fellows start lift 'em up dolly bars in eighteen-inch mill, its big hunk steel what is heavy lak anyting, so dat dey strong for Sunday. Some people say dey betcha dat Pete Pussick be strongest mans for Pete lift 'em up dolly bars same lak it was toothpicks; other peoples tink maybe Eli Stanoski be better mans and he gone catch fine girls lak Mary for *frau*. But everybody wish it gone be him who is best mans and everybody dey lookit at Mary and dey feel strong lak anyting.

So pretty soon next Sunday be dere and Hunkie mans comit from Monesson, comit from Homestead, comit from Duquesne, comit from every place along Monongahela River and dey gone show everybody how strong dey be dis time. Steve have everyting fix 'em up: in big field down by river bank he put two barrel beer what comit from brewery, he put table what he makit where Old Lady gone put prune-jack and cakes, and he have three dolly bar what he get from mill.

One dose dolly bar its joost little one what weigh three hundred fifty pound, 'nother dolly bars weigh five hundred pounds, and big ones she weigh more as 'nother two put together. On side of field Steve has fixed 'em up benches where womans can sit and nurse baby and see what gone happen and right by dere is platform lak have on Fourth July with red paper and flags and everyting. Mary she sit on platform where all young fellow can see good and see what dey gone get after dey lift 'em up dolly bars. Mary was dressed up lak dere was big funeral: she have on dress what mudder had made from wedding dress and it was pretty I tell you. It was all red and green, silk too, and on front was big bunch lace what *Groszmutter* in old country makit. On finger was ring with nice red stone what Steve buy from company store and on head was nice scarf. Oh, sure, when Mary go on platform everybody say she was prettier as Queen.

Steve was happy mans dat day, I tell you. He was dressed up with sleeves down and tie on his neck and he walkit 'round lak he was Boss everyting and he yell lak dis:

"Hi, yah, Pete. You tink you feelit all right to-day? By Gods, better you no be sick and have lots steam. It take plenty strong mans to lift 'em up dolly bars."

And den he say:

"Hi, yah, Eli. What matter you? Mebbe better you take 'nother drink prune-jack. You lookit little bit white in face lak you was 'fraid Pete nor Sam gone be stronger as you. By Gods, was I young mans same as you I lift 'em up whole damn three bars one time to catch fine girls lak Mary."

Den he laughit and pull mustache and walkit up and down same lak nigger mans on pay day.

After everybody visit 'round little bit and everybody havit one, two, three drink all around, Steve get on platform and makit speech. He say:

"For coople year now everybody what is young mans and feelit pretty good dey comit for me and dey say: 'Pretty soon Mary gone lookit for mans. Me! I catch good job for blast furnace. Me, I be best mans what workit for mills, best mans what ever poke 'em out tap hole. Sure! I be strong lak anyting. Whats matter Mary no be *frau* for me?' "

Den Steve he stopit speech and he stickit out tongue lak he was not feelit so good for stomach and he say:

"By Gods, I hear so many mans talk lak dat dat it makit me sick. So I fix 'em up plan and now we gone see who be good mans for marry Mary, daughter of Steve Mestrovich, me, by Gods, what is best mans who was cinderman for open hearth any place. First, everybody gone lift 'em up small dolly bars. If anybody no lift 'em up dat little one den he joost go and play with little kids, dats all. Next, everybody gone to lift 'em up second dolly bars. Anybody no lift 'em up dat second dolly bars den dey go and sit with womans and stay out road of strong mans while strong mans gone show him someting. Den, everybody gone lift 'em up last dolly bars. By Gods, dis dolly bar she be from bloomer mill and she is so heavy dis time dat I no can lift him myself. Somebody gone lift 'em up dat hunk steel den by Jezus, dats mans what gone marry Mary, ya damn right, ya betcha."

So all young fellows pull off shirt and get ready to lift dolly bars. First mans was Pete. Pete he walkit over by dolly bars and he lookit 'round for make sure everybody see and den he reach down and lift 'em up easy lak anyting. Everybody holler:

"Dats big mans, you Pete! Dats good fellow!"

Pete he no say nothing. He joost walkit away and he laughit lak he feel sure he gone be plenty strong dis time. Den Eli gone over by dolly bars and he lift 'em up easier as Pete and everybody yell some more. Two fellows what comit from Homestead try and lift 'em up and dey no can move dolly bars from ground. Den everybody laughit and say:

"Ho! Ho! Ho! What kinds mans you have dat place, Homestead? At home I got boy joost two year old and I tink mebbe I better send him over by your mill to help you out little bit. Better you go and play with kids little mans so dat you no monkey 'round with big mans and get hurt dis time."

Well, after dat dey lift 'em up second dolly bars and what you tink? Only three mans catch enough steam to do dat. Dat was Pete, dat was Eli, and dat was 'nother mans from Johnstown. Dis fellow from Johnstown was plenty big mans all right and he catch plenty steam to lift 'em up dolly bars. He do dat easy as anyting. Den all his friends dey yell hoorah for him and dey make face at Pete and Eli same lak dey was sure dat dis fellow was gone be strongest mans and take Mary Mestrovich back to Johnstown with him. People from dis place no lak dat business. Dey lak much better Pete nor Eli gone be strongest and den Mary Mestrovich stay dis place which have better mills as Johnstown anytime. Dat mills at Johnstown is joost little place what when do best she can no makit more as one, two hundred tons steel a day. So peoples get mad at dese peoples from Johnstown and dey gone makit bet dat Pete nor Eli gone be stronger as dis fellow. Pete say dat is good business and nobody gone worry nothing, he gone lift 'em up big dolly bars joost same lak he lift 'em up little ones. Den Pete he gone over take big, big drink prune-jack and he spit on hands. Den he reach down and grab hold dat big dolly bars. His arm crack lak paper bag, his eyes stick out from head lak apple, sweat run down face same lak he was workit in front furnace in July. By Jezus, dat dolly bars no movit one inch from ground. Den Eli try it and he was no good dis time. People from dis place groan lak somebody kick in stomach when dey see dat. Dey tink for sure now dey gone lose Mary Mestrovich, dey gone lose money, and den dey must listen when peoples from Johnstown say:

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Over by dis place mans is joost same lak old womans who talkit all time and no doit nothing. Comit over by Johnstown where mans so strong dat dey tear down mill and fix 'em up again every day joost for fun."

Den dis fellow from Johnstown takit two big, big drinks prune-jack, he twist mustache so she look lak King, and he wave hand for everybody. Den he fixit his feets so he no be shaky and bend down and grabit dat dolly bars. He give big pull, and den another big pull and he grunt all time lak pig at dinner time. He pullit so damn hard on dat dolly bars dat his hand come loose and he fallit down on ground.

Peoples from dis place feelit much better: she is not so easy as dis fellow tink. Johnstown fellow mad lak *frau* when hoosband get drunk and spend all money on pay days. He joomp up from ground and he cuss lak hell and he grabit dolly bars again. No good dis time neither.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!"

A laugh lak dat comit from somebody in crowd. Everybody lookit 'round to see who laughit lak dat; mans from Johnstown straighten back and he say:

"Who laughit for me? By Jezus Christ a Mighty, if dat fellow who laughit tink he be so strong mans whats matter he no comit here and pick 'em up dolly bars? Den after he do dat I gone broke his neck."

Den out from crowd walkit biggest mans whatever I see: he have back bigger as door, hands bigger as Pete nor Eli together, neck lak big bulls, and arm bigger as somebodys round waist. I betcha my life he was more as seven feets tall. Oh, he was prettiest mans whatever anybody ever see. Everybody lookit everybody and everybody say:

"Who is dat fellow anyhow?"

And everybody shake heads no, dey never see before.

Dat fellow he walkit over to dolly bars and he was laughit so hard he have to holdit his belly so dat he can stand on feet. Dat fellow from Johnstown he takit pull at trousers, he spit on hands and he gone take slug at dat fellow. But dat mans he grabit fellow from Johnstown with one hands and with 'nother he pick 'em up dolly bars. Den he hold 'em out and shake until mans from Johnstown yell he was so 'fraid.

By Gods, everybody was white lak sheet. Dey never see before mans what was so strong lak dat. But dat fellow put dat fellow from Johnstown down so easy as little baby by mudder and he say:

"Nobody be 'fraid nothing. I no wanit hurt nobody, no wanit makit trooble. Joost havit little bit fun, dats all."

Steve Mestrovich walkit over and he say:

"What kind mans you are? Which place you comit from?"

And dat fellow answer:

"My name is Joe Magarac, what you tink of dat, eh?"

Everybody laughit for dat for *magarac* in Hunkie mean jackass donkey. Dey know dis fellow is fine fellow all right when he say his name is Joe Jackass. Den dis fellow say:

"Sure! Magarac, Joe. Dats me. All I do is eatit and workit same lak jackass donkey. Me, I be only steelmans in whole world, ya damn right. Lookit for me; I show you something."

He pull 'em off shirt and everybody lookit. By Gods, he no tell lie. He was steelmans all right: all over he was steel same lak is from open hearth, steel hands, steel body, steel everything. Everybody say:

"What the hells you tink of dat?"

Joe Magarac say:

"Dats all right, dats good business for me. Me, I was born inside ore mountain many year ago. Today I comit down from mountain in ore train and was over in ore pile by blast furnace."

Den he laughit and twist dolly bars in two with hands.

Steve Mestrovich smile lak somebody givit him cold beer on hot day and he takit Mary by hand and leadit her over to Joe Magarac: dis time he gone catch best hoosband for Mary dat was in whole country. Joe Magarac takit long look at Mary and he say:

"Oh, boy, I never see such pretty girls as dat. You makit fine *frau* for anybodies. But dat is no business for me. What you tink, I catch time for sit around house with womans? No, by Gods, not me. I joost catch time for workit dats all. Be better all right if Mary have hoosband and I tink I see her get little bit dizzy in head when she lookit for Pete. Dats good, for after me dis Pete is best mans in country."

Joe Magarac close one eyes for Steve and Steve close one eyes for Joe Magarac and Mary was happy lak anyting for she lak dat Pete all right better as anybody. Fellow from Johnstown get black in face and he stomp 'round mad lak anyting, but he 'fraid say anyting for fellow who was made out of steel and who comit from ore mountain. So he go away.

Everyting was fixed 'em up all right den: Priest comit with altar boy and Pete and Mary kneel down and pretty soon dey was hoosband and *frau*. First one to dancit with bride was Joe Magarac. Den everybody get drunk, have big time and was happy as anyting.

So next day, Joe Magarac gone down to Mrs. Horkey, who catch boarding-house by mill gate and he say:

"Howdy do, Mrs. Horkey. My but you lookit nice dis morning and from kitchen comit smell of best breakfast whatever I smell anyplace. Dis place lookit all right for me. I gone work in mill dis place and I wanit good place for eat.

I no wanit room, joost five big meals a day, dats all, for I workit night turn and day turn all at same time."

So Joe Magarac livit by Horkey's boarding-house and he catch job in mill. He workit on Noomber Seven furnace by open hearth and he workit all night and all day without finish and he no get tired nothing. He standit before Noomber Seven and he throw 'em in limestone, ore, scrap and everyting and den he go sit in furnace door with fires from furnace licking 'round chin. When steel melt 'em up, Joe Magarac put in hands and stir steel 'round while she was cookit and when furnace was ready for tap 'em out he crawl into furnace and scoop up big handfuls steel and dump 'em into ingot mould. After dat he run down to lower end and grab dat steel in hands and squeeze 'em out from fingers and he makit rails. Eight rails one time, four by each hand, he makit by Gods. Pretty soon he makit more steel as all other furnace together. Nobody ever see before such business lak dat, so boss of open hearth have big sign made and he put sign on mill fence where everybody see and dis sign say:

THE HOME OF JOE MAGARAC

Joe Magarac was workit every day and every night at mill and same lak before he was makit rails with hands. Pretty soon dat pile of rails in yard get bigger and bigger for Joe Magarac is workit so hard and after coople months yard was full, everyplace was rails. When Joe Magarac see dat he joost laughit and workit harder as ever. So one day roller-boss he comit up from down by finishing mills and he say to Joe Magarac who was workit by his furnace in open hearth. Roller-boss he say:

"Well, Joe Magarac, I guess we gone shut mill down early dis week. Dis time we catch plenty rails everyplace and we no catch many orders. So by Gods, we gone shut mill down Thursday night and we no start 'em up again until Monday morning. Mebbe you gone put slow heat in furnace: you tell stockman give you fifty-ton stock. You put 'em in stock and give furnace slow fire so dat she keepit warm and be ready for start 'em up on Monday."

Joe Magarac he act lak he gone say someting and den he no say nothing and roller-boss tink everyting gone be all right dis time and he gone away.

When next Monday comit mans gone back to work for open hearth. Den dey see dat Joe Magarac is not workit on furnace dat morning. Everyplace dey lookit and dey no see Joe anyplace. 'Nother mans was workit on Noomber Seven and pretty soon when Noomber Seven was ready for tap 'em out melter-boss gone down to platform to see what kind steel dat slow heat makit. He was standit by ingot mould and pretty soon he hear voice what say:

"How she lookit dis time?"

Melter-boss lookit 'round and he no see nobody and den dat voice say again:

"It's me, Joe Magarac. I'm inside ladle."

Melter-boss turn around and he lookit inside ladle and he see Joe. Joe was sitting inside ladle with hot steel boiling up around neck. Melter-boss was scared lak anyting and he say:

"What the hells you do in dere, Joe Magarac? Better you gone crawl out dat ladle right 'way or I tink maybe for sure dat she gone melt you up."

Joe Magarac close one eyes for melter-boss and he say:

"Dats fine. Dats good business, dats joost what I wanit. By Gods, I be sick dis time of mill what shut down on Thursday and no start 'em up again until Monday. What the hells I gone do all time mill is shut down anyway? I hear big boss say dat he was gone makit two, three good heats steel so dat he gone have best steel what we can makit for buildit new mill dis place. Dey gone tear down dis old mills and makit new ones what is gone be best mills in whole Monongahela valley, what gone be best mills in whole world. Den by Gods, I get plan: I gone joomp in furnace when steel is melted down and dey gone melt 'em up me, who was made from steel, to makit steel to makit dat mills. Now Mr. Boss you gone listen for me and I gone tell you someting. You gone take dis ladle steel what has me inside and you gone pour 'em out in ingot mould and den you gone roll 'em out and makit beam, channel, and maybe one, two piece angle and you gone take dat steel and makit new mills. You do lak I say for you and you gone see you gone have best mills for anyplace. Good-by."

Den Joe Magarac sit back down in ladle and hold his chin down in boiling steel until he was all melted up. Pretty soon dey pour him out in ingot mould.

Well, after dey roll 'em out dat heat and dey cut 'em up dey see dat dis time dey have best steel what was ever made. Oh, my, dat steel was smooth and straight and it no have seam or pipe nothing. Den melter-boss he gone 'round for everybody and he say:

"Now we gone have best mills for sure. You see dat steel? By Gods, nobody ever see steel lak dat before and dats joost because Joe Magarac he makit dat steel. Sure, he's inside and now we gone takit dat beam and dat channel and we gone build finest mills what ever was."

Dey do lak melter-boss say and dat is why all young boys want to go for mill, and dat is why when somebody call Hunkie *magarac* he only laughit and feel proud as anyting, and dat is why we catch the best mill for anyplace, ya damn right!

## Johnny Appleseed: A Pioneer Hero

The "far West" is rapidly becoming only a traditional designation: railroads have destroyed the romance of frontier life, or have surrounded it with so many appliances of civili-

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zation that the pioneer character is rapidly becoming mythical. The men and women who obtain their groceries and dry-goods from New York by rail in a few hours have nothing in common with those who, fifty years ago, "packed" salt a hundred miles to make their mush palatable, and could only exchange corn and wheat for molasses and calico by making long and perilous voyages in flat-boats down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. Two generations of frontier lives have accumulated stores of narratives which, like the small but beautiful tributaries of great rivers, are forgotten in the broad sweep of the larger current of history. The march of Titans sometimes tramples out the memory of smaller but more useful lives, and sensational glare often eclipses more modest but purer lights. This has been the case in the popular demand for the dime novel dilutions of Fenimore Cooper's romances of border life, which have preserved the records of Indian rapine and atrocity as the only memorials of pioneer history. But the early days of Western settlement witnessed sublimer heroisms than those of human torture, and nobler victories than those of the tomahawk and scalping-knife.

Among the heroes of endurance that was voluntary, and of action that was creative and not sanguinary, there was one man whose name, seldom mentioned now save by some of the few surviving pioneers, deserves to be perpetuated.

The first reliable trace of our modest hero finds him in the Territory of Ohio, in 1801, with a horse-load of apple seeds, which he planted in various places on and about the borders of Licking Creek, the first orchard thus originated by him being on the farm of Isaac Stadden, in what is now known as Licking County, in the State of Ohio. During the five succeeding years, although he was undoubtedly following the same strange occupation, we have no authentic account of his movements until we reach a pleasant spring day in 1806, when a pioneer settler in Jefferson County, Ohio, noticed a peculiar craft, with a remarkable occupant and a curious cargo, slowly dropping down with the current of the Ohio River. It was "Johnny Appleseed," by which name Jonathan Chapman was afterward known in every log-cabin from the Ohio River to the Northern lakes, and westward to the prairies of what is now the State of Indiana. With two canoes lashed together he was transporting a load of apple seeds to the Western frontier, for the purpose of creating orchards on the farthest verge of white settlements. With his canoes he passed down the Ohio to Marietta, where he entered the Muskingum, ascending the stream of that river until he reached the mouth of the Walhonding, or White Woman Creek, and still onward, up the Mohican, into the Black Fork, to the head of navigation, in the region now known as Ashland and Richland Counties, on the line of the Pittsburgh and Fort Wayne Railroad, in Ohio. A long and toilsome voyage it was, as a glance at the map will show, and must have occupied a great deal of time, as the lonely traveler stopped at every inviting spot to plant the seeds and make his infant nurseries. These are the first well-authenticated facts in the history of Jonathan Chapman, whose birth, there is good reason for believing, occurred in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1775. According to this, which was his own statement in one of his less reticent moods, he was, at the time of his appearance on Licking Creek, twenty-six years of age, and whether impelled in his eccentricities by some absolute misery of the heart which could only find relief in incessant motion, or governed by a benevolent monomania, his whole after-life was devoted to the work of planting apple seeds in remote places. The seeds he gathered from the cider-presses of Western Pennsylvania; but his canoe voyage in 1806 appears to have been the only occasion upon which he adopted that method of transporting them, as all his subsequent journeys were made on foot. Having planted his stock of seeds, he would return to Pennsylvania for a fresh supply, and, as sacks made of any less substantial fabric would not endure the hard usage of the long trip through forests dense with underbrush and briers, he provided himself with leathern bags. Securely packed, the seeds were conveyed, sometimes on the back of a horse, and not infrequently on his own shoulders, either over a part of the old Indian trail that led from Fort Duquesne to Detroit, by way of Fort Sandusky, or over what is styled in the appendix to "Hutchins's History of Boguet's Expedition in 1764" the "second route through the wilderness of Ohio," which would require him to traverse a distance of one hundred and sixty-six miles in a west-northwest direction from Fort Duquesne in order to reach the Black Fork of the Mohican.

This region, although it is now densely populated, still possesses a romantic beauty that railroads and bustling towns can not obliterate—a country of forest-clad hills and green valleys, through which numerous bright streams flow on their way to the Ohio; but when Johnny Appleseed reached some lonely log-cabin he would find himself in a veritable wilderness. The old settlers say that the margins of the streams, near which the first settlements were generally made, were thickly covered with a low, matted growth of small timber, while nearer to the water was a rank mass of long grass, interlaced with morning-glory and wild pea vines among which funereal willows and clustering alders stood like sentinels on the outpost of civilization. The hills, that rise almost to the dignity of mountains, were crowned with forest trees, and in the coverts were innumerable bears, wolves, deer, and droves of wild hogs, that were as ferocious as any beast of prey. In the grass the massasauga and other venomous reptiles lurked in such numbers that a settler named Chandler has left the fact on record that during the first season of his residence, while mowing a little prairie which formed part of his land, he killed over two hundred black rattlesnakes in an area that would involve an average destruction of one of these reptiles for each rod of land. The frontiersman, who felt himself sufficiently protected by his rifle against wild beasts and hostile Indians, found it necessary to guard against the attacks of the insidious enemies in the grass by wrapping bandages of dried grass around his buckskin leggings and moccasins; but Johnny would shoulder his bag of apple seeds, and with bare feet penetrate to some remote spot that combined picturesqueness and fertility of soil, and there he would plant his seeds, place a slight inclosure around the place, and leave them to grow until the trees were large enough to be transplanted by the settlers, who, in the meantime, would have made their clearings in the vicinity. The sites chosen by him are, many of them, well known, and are such as an artist or a poet would select—open places on the loamy lands that border the creeks—rich, secluded spots, hemmed in by giant trees, picturesque now, but fifty years ago, with their wild surroundings and the primal silence, they must have been tenfold more so.

In personal appearance Chapman was a small, wiry man, full of restless activity; he had long dark hair, a scanty beard that was never shaved, and keen black eyes that sparkled with a peculiar brightness. His dress was of the oddest description. Generally, even in the coldest weather, he went barefooted, but sometimes, for his long journeys, he would make himself a rude pair of sandals; at other times he would wear any cast-off foot-covering he chanced to find—a boot on one foot and an old brogan or a moccasin on the other. It appears to have been a matter of conscience with him never to purchase shoes, although he was rarely without money enough to do so. On one occasion, in an unusually cold November, while he was traveling barefooted through mud and snow, a settler who happened to possess a pair of shoes that were too small for his own use forced their acceptance upon Johnny, declaring that it was sinful for a human being to travel with naked feet in such weather. A few days afterward the donor was in the village that has since become the thriving city of Mansfield, and met his beneficiary contentedly plodding along with his feet bare and half frozen. With some degree of anger he inquired for the cause of such foolish conduct, and received for reply that Johnny had overtaken a poor, barefooted family moving westward, and as they appeared to be in much greater need of clothing than he was, he had given them the shoes. His dress was generally composed of cast-off clothing, that he had taken in payment for apple-trees; and as the pioneers were far less extravagant than their descendants in such matters, the homespun and buckskin garments that they discarded would not be very elegant or serviceable. In his later years, however, he seems to have thought that even this kind of second-hand raiment was too luxurious, as his principal garment was made of a coffee sack, in which he cut holes for his head and arms to pass through, and pronounced it "a very serviceable cloak, and as good clothing as any man need wear." In the matter of head-gear his taste was equally unique; his first experiment was with a tin vessel that served to cook his mush, but this was open to the objection that it did not protect his eyes from the beams of the sun; so he constructed a hat of pasteboard with an immense peak in front, and having thus secured an article that combined usefulness with economy, it became his permanent fashion.

Thus strangely clad, he was perpetually wandering through forests and morasses, and suddenly appearing in white settlements and Indian villages; but there must have been some rare force of gentle goodness dwelling in his looks and breathing in his words, for it is the testimony of all who knew him that, notwithstanding his ridiculous attire, he was always treated with the greatest respect by the rudest frontiersman, and, what is a better test, the boys of the settlements forbore to jeer at him. With grown-up people and boys he was usually reticent, but manifested great affection for little girls, always having pieces of ribbon and gay calico to give to his little favorites. Many a grandmother in Ohio and Indiana can remember the presents she received when a child from poor homeless Johnny Appleseed. When he consented to eat with any family he would never sit down to the table until he was assured that there was an ample supply for the children; and his sympathy for their youthful troubles and his kindness toward them made him friends among all the juveniles of the borders.

The Indians also treated Johnny with the greatest kindness. By these wild and sanguinary savages he was regarded as a "great medicine man," on account of his strange appearance, eccentric actions, and, especially, the fortitude with which he could endure pain, in proof of which he would often thrust pins and needles into his flesh. His nervous sensibilities really seem to have been less acute than those of ordinary people, for his method of treating the cuts and sores that were the consequences of his barefooted wanderings through briers and thorns was to sear the wound with a red-hot iron, and then cure the burn. During the war of 1812, when the frontier settlers were tortured and slaughtered by the savage allies of Great Britain, Johnny Appleseed continued his wanderings, and was never harmed by the roving bands of hostile Indians. On many occasions the impunity with which he ranged the country enabled him to give the settlers warning of approaching danger in time to allow them to take refuge in their blockhouses before the savages could attack them. Our informant refers to one of these instances, when the news of Hull's surrender came like a thunder-bolt upon the frontier. Large bands of Indians and British were destroying everything before them and murdering defenseless women and children, and even the blockhouses were not always a sufficient protection. At this time Johnny travelled day and night, warning the people of the approaching danger. He visited every cabin and delivered this message: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath anointed me to blow the trumpet in the wilderness, and sound an alarm in the forest; for, behold, the tribes of the heathen are round about your doors, and a devouring flame followeth after them." The aged man who narrated this incident said that he could feel even now the thrill that was caused by this prophetic announcement of the wild-looking herald of danger, who aroused the family on a bright moonlit midnight with his piercing voice. Refusing all offers of food and denying himself a moment's rest, he traversed the border day and night until he had warned every settler of the approaching peril.

His diet was as meagre as his clothing. He believed it to be a sin to kill any creature for food, and thought that all that was necessary for human sustenance was produced by the soil. He was also a strenuous opponent of the waste of food, and on one occasion, on approaching a log-cabin, he observed some fragments of bread floating upon the surface of a bucket of slops that was intended for the pigs. He immediately fished them out, and when the housewife expressed her astonishment, he told her that it was an abuse of the gifts of a merciful God to allow the smallest quantity of anything that was designed to supply the wants of mankind to be diverted from its purpose.

In this instance, as in his whole life, the peculiar religious ideas of Johnny Appleseed were exemplified. He was a most earnest disciple of the faith taught by Emanuel Swedenborg, and himself claimed to have frequent conversations with angels and spirits; two of the latter, of the feminine gender, he asserted, had revealed to him that they were to be his wives in a future state if he abstained from a matrimonial alliance on earth. He entertained a profound reverence for the revelations of the Swedish seer, and always carried a few old volumes with him. These he was very anxious should be read by everyone, and he was probably not only the first colporteur in the wilderness of Ohio, but as he had no tract society to furnish him supplies, he certainly devised an original method of multiplying one book into a number. He divided his books into several pieces, leaving a portion at a log-cabin, and on a subsequent visit furnishing another fragment, and continuing this process as diligently as though the work had been published in serial numbers. By this plan he was enabled to furnish reading for several people at the same time, and out of one book; but it must have been a difficult undertaking for some nearly illiterate backwoodsman to endeavor to comprehend Swedenborg by a backward course of reading, when his first installment happened to be the last fraction of the volume. Johnny's faith in Swedenborg's works was so reverential as almost to be superstitious. He was once asked if, in traveling barefooted through forests abounding with venomous reptiles, he was not afraid of being bitten. With his peculiar smile, he drew his book from his bosom, and said, "This book is an infallible protection against all danger here and hereafter."

It was his custom, when he had been welcomed to some hospitable log-house after a weary day of journeying, to lie down on the puncheon floor, and, after inquiring if his auditors would hear "some news right fresh from heaven," produce his few tattered books, among which would be a New Testament, and read and expound until his uncultivated hearers would catch the spirit and glow of his enthusiasm, while they scarcely comprehended his language. A lady who knew him in his later years writes in the following terms of one of these domiciliary readings of poor, self-sacrificing Johnny Appleseed: "We can hear him read now, just as he did that summer day, when we were busy quilting upstairs, and he lay near the door, his voice rising denunciatory and thrilling—strong and loud as the roar of wind and waves, then soft and soothing as the balmy airs that quivered the morning-glory leaves about his gray beard. His was a strange eloquence at times, and he was undoubtedly a man of genius." What a scene is presented to our imagination! The interior of a primitive cabin, the wide, open fire-place, where a few sticks are burning beneath the iron pot in which the evening meal is cooking; around the fire-place the attentive group, composed of the sturdy pioneer and his wife and children, listening with a reverential awe to the "news right fresh from heaven"; and reclining on the floor, clad in rags, but with his gray hairs glorified by the beams of the setting sun that flood through the open door and the unchinked logs of the humble building, this poor wanderer, with the gift of genius and eloquence, who believes with the faith of apostles and martyrs that God has appointed him a mission in the wilderness to preach the Gospel of love, and plant apple seeds that shall produce orchards for the benefit of men and women and little children whom he has never seen. If there is a sublimer faith or a more genuine eloquence in richly decorated cathedrals and under brocade vestments, it would be worth a long journey to find it.

Next to his advocacy of his peculiar religious ideas, his enthusiasm for the cultivation of apple trees in what he termed "the only proper way"—that is, from the seed—was the absorbing object of his life. Upon this, as upon religion, he was eloquent in his appeals. He would describe the growing and ripening fruit as such a rare and beautiful gift of the Almighty with words that became pictures, until his hearers could almost see its manifold forms of beauty present before them. To his eloquence on this subject, as well as to his actual labors in planting nurseries, the country over which he traveled for so many years is largely indebted for its numerous orchards. But he denounced as absolute wickedness all devices of pruning and grafting, and would speak of the act of cutting a tree as if it were a cruelty inflicted upon a sentient being.

Not only is he entitled to the fame of being the earliest colporteur on the frontiers, but in the work of protecting animals from abuse and suffering he preceded, while, in his smaller sphere, he equaled the zeal of the good Mr. Bergh. Whenever Johnny saw an animal abused, or heard of it, he would purchase it and give it to some more humane settler, on condition that it should be kindly treated and properly cared for. It frequently happened that the long journey into the wilderness would cause the new settlers to be encumbered with lame and broken-down horses, that were turned loose to die. In the autumn Johnny would make a diligent search for all such animals, and, gathering them up, he would bargain for their food and shelter until the next spring, when he would lead them away to some good pasture for the summer. If they recovered so as to be capable of working, he would never sell them, but would lend or give them away, stipulating for their good usage. His conception of the absolute sin of inflicting pain or death upon any creature was not limited to the higher forms of animal life, but every thing that had being was to him, in the fact of its life, endowed with so much of the Divine Essence that to wound or destroy it was to inflict an injury upon some atom of Divinity. No Brahmin could be more concerned for the preservation of insect life, and the only occasion on which he destroyed a venomous reptile was a source of long regret, to which he could never refer without manifesting sadness. He had elected a suitable place for planting apple seeds on a small prairie, and in order to prepare the ground he was mowing the long grass, when he was bitten by a rattlesnake. In describing the event he sighed heavily, and said, "Poor fellow, he only just touched me, when I, in the heat of my ungodly passion, put the heel of my scythe in him, and went away. Some time afterward I went back, and there lay the poor fellow dead." Numerous anecdotes bearing upon his respect for every form of life are preserved, and form the staple of pioneer recollections. On one occasion, a cool autumnal night, when Johnny, who always camped out in preference to sleeping in a house, had built a fire near which he intended to pass the night, he noticed that the blaze attracted large numbers of mosquitoes, many of whom flew too near his fire and were burned. He immediately brought water and quenched the fire, accounting for his conduct afterward by saying, "God forbid that I should build a fire for my comfort which should be the means of destroying any of His creatures!" At another time he removed the fire he had built near a hollow log, and slept on the snow, because he found that the log contained a bear and her cubs, whom, he said, he did not wish to disturb. And this unwillingness to inflict pain or death was equally strong when he was a sufferer by it, as the following will show. Johnny had been assisting some settlers to make a road through the woods, and in the course of their work they accidentally destroyed a hornets' nest. One of the angry insects soon found a lodgment under Johnny's coffee-sack cloak, but although it stung him repeatedly he removed it with the greatest gentleness. The men who were present laughingly asked him why he did not kill it. To which he gravely replied that "It would not be right to kill the poor thing, for it did not intend to hurt me."

Theoretically he was as methodical in matters of business as any merchant. In addition to their picturesqueness, the locations of his nurseries were all fixed with a view to a probable demand for the trees by the time they had attained sufficient growth for transplanting. He would give them away to those who could not pay for them. Generally, however, he sold them for old clothing or a supply of corn meal; but he preferred to receive a note payable at some indefinite period. When this was accomplished he seemed to think that the transaction was completed in a business-like way; but if the giver of the note did not attend to its payment, the holder of it never troubled himself about its collection. His expenses for food and clothing were so very limited that, notwithstanding his freedom from the *auri sacra fames*, he was frequently in possession of more money than he cared to keep, and it was quickly disposed of for wintering infirm horses, or given to some poor family whom the ague had prostrated or the accidents of border life impoverished. In a single instance only he is known to have invested his surplus means in the purchase of land, having received a deed from Alexander Finley, of Mohican Township, Ashland County, Ohio, for a part of the southwest quarter of section twenty-six; but with his customary indifference to matters of value, Johnny failed to record the deed, and lost it. Only a few years ago the property was in litigation.

We must not leave the reader under the impression that this man's life, so full of hardship and perils, was a gloomy or unhappy one. There is an element of human pride in all martyrdom, which, if it does not soften the pains, stimulates the power of endurance. Johnny's life was made serenely happy by the conviction that he was living like the primitive Christians. Nor was he devoid of a keen humor, to which he occasionally gave vent, as the following will show. Toward the latter part of Johnny's career in Ohio an itinerant missionary found his way to the village of Mansfield, and preached to an open-air congregation. The discourse was tediously lengthy, and unnecessarily severe upon the sin of extravagance, which was beginning to manifest itself among the pioneers by an occasional indulgence in the carnal vanities of calico and "store tea." There was a good deal of the Pharisaic leaven in the preacher, who very frequently emphasized his discourse by the inquiry, "Where now is there a man who, like the primitive Christians, is traveling to heaven barefooted and clad in coarse raiment?" When this interrogation had been repeated beyond all reasonable endurance, Johnny rose from the log on which he was reclining, and advancing to the speaker, he placed one of his bare feet upon the stump which served for a pulpit, and pointing to his coffee-sack garment, he quietly said, "Here's your primitive Christian!" The well-clothed missionary hesitated and stammered and dismissed the congregation. His pet antithesis was destroyed by Johnny's personal appearance, which was far more primitive than the preacher cared to copy.

Some of the pioneers were disposed to think that Johnny's humor was the cause of an extensive practical joke; but it is generally conceded now that a widespread annoyance was really the result of his belief that the offensively odored weed known in the West as the dog-fennel, but more generally styled the May-weed, possessed valuable anti-malarial virtues. He procured some seeds of the plant in Pennsylvania, and sowed them in the vicinity of every house in the region of his travels. The consequence was that successive flourishing crops of the weed spread over the whole country, and caused almost as much trouble as the disease it was intended to ward off; and to this day the dog-fennel, introduced by Johnny Appleseed, is one of the worst grievances of the Ohio farmers.

In 1838—thirty-seven years after his appearance on Licking Creek—Johnny noticed that civilization, wealth, and population were pressing into the wilderness of Ohio. Hitherto he had easily kept just in advance of the wave of settlement; but now towns and churches were making their appearance, and even, at long intervals, the stage-driver's horn broke the silence of the grand old forests, and he felt that his work was done in the region in which he had labored so long. He visited every house, and took a solemn farewell of all the families. The little girls who had been delighted with his gifts of fragments of calico and ribbons had become sober matrons, and the boys who had wondered at his ability to bear the pain caused by running needles into his flesh were heads of families. With parting words of admonition he left them, and turned his steps steadily toward the setting sun.

During the succeeding nine years he pursued his eccentric avocation on the western border of Ohio and in Indiana. In the summer of 1847, when his labors had literally borne fruit over a hundred thousand square miles of territory, at the close of a warm day, after traveling twenty miles, he entered the house of a settler in Allen County, Indiana, and was, as usual, warmly welcomed. He declined to eat with the family, but accepted some bread and milk, which he partook of sitting on the door-step and gazing on the setting sun. Later in the evening he delivered his "news right fresh from heaven" by reading the Beatitudes. Declining other accommodation, he slept, as usual, on the floor, and in the early morning he was found with his features all aglow with a supernal light, and his body so near death that his tongue refused its office. The physician, who was hastily summoned, pronounced him dying, but added that he had never seen a man in so placid a state at the approach of death. At seventy-two years of age, forty-six of which had been devoted to his self-imposed mission, he ripened into death as naturally and beautifully as the seeds of his own planting had grown into fibre and bud and blossom and the matured fruit.

Thus died one of the memorable men of pioneer times, who never inflicted pain or knew an enemy—a man of strange habits, in whom there dwelt a comprehensive love that reached with one hand downward to the lowest forms of life, and with the other upward to the very throne of God. A laboring, self-denying benefactor of his race, homeless, solitary, and ragged, he trod the thorny earth with bare and bleeding feet, intent only upon making the wilderness fruitful. Now "no man knoweth of his sepulchre"; but his deeds will live in the fragrance of the apple blossoms he loved so well, and the story of his life, however crudely narrated, will be a perpetual proof that true heroism, pure benevolence, noble virtues, and deeds that deserve immortality may be found under meanest apparel, and far from gilded halls and towering spires.

## *Part Two*

# Cracker Barrel and Liars' Bench

*It was common in the bar-rooms, the gatherings in the "country store," and finally at public meetings in the mouths of "stump orators." Arguments were clinched, and political principles illustrated by a "funny story." It invaded even the camp meeting and the pulpit. It at last received the currency of the public press. But wherever met it was so individual and characteristic, that it was at once known and appreciated abroad as "an American story."*
—*Bret Harte*

*The humorous story may be spun out to great length, and may wander around as much as it pleases, and arrive nowhere in particular; but the comic and witty stories must be brief and end with a point. . . . To string incongruities and absurdities together in a wandering and sometimes purposeless way, and seem innocently unaware that they are absurdities, is the basis of the American art of the humorous story.*
—*Mark Twain*

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### I
### Wit and Nitwit

### II
### The Sky's the Limit

# I. Wit and Nitwit

Crack . . . *Slang. A gibing retort; a quip.*
Slam . . . *Colloq. A violent criticism.—Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition (1936)*

*"My deceased uncle," says Old Abe, "was the most polite gentleman in the world. He was making a trip on the Mississippi when the boat sank. He got his head above the water for once, took off his hat, and said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, will you please excuse me?' and down he went."* —*Old Abe's Jokes*

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## Introduction

### THAT REMINDS ME

To Bret Harte the characteristic form of "American story" and the "parent of the American 'short story'" was the "funny story." This was the story heard at rural social gatherings and loafing places—in country stores and taverns, around stoves and bars, at logrollings and huskings, barbecues and picnics, school and church socials and fairs. Brief, apt stories with a point have always been used not only for entertainment but also as a practical device for illustrating ideas and traits, adorning a moral, or clinching an argument. Hence the wide use of the humorous illustration in connection with religion and politics.

In the story-telling belt of the South, where politics has always been more a matter of personalities than of issues, Crockett was one of the first to discover the secret that telling "good-humored stories" is, next to standing treat, the best way to relieve the dryness of a campaign speech and has it all over talking government matters when it comes to winning voters and influencing audiences. His success with

"Grinning the Bark off a Tree" can be matched by any number of similar instances in which a witty thrust or clever take-off has turned the tide of a campaign.[1] In the South, too, the evangelical preacher has found the funny story almost as indispensable and as infallible as the Bible for settling doctrinal disputes.

The master of the humorous illustration or proverbial anecdote—"pointed, pungent, pithy, and practical"—was Lincoln, whose experience and technique may be taken as typical of the story-teller with a purpose. A graduate of the country store school of anecdotage, Lincoln was brought up on Aesop's fables and used to keep a copy of *Joe Miller's Jests* handy. From these models he learned how to combine wit and mirth with argument, and how to make the point clear without giving it away and without wasting words. "That reminds me" or "Now that reminds me of a story" became his trademark. Just as everything reminded him of a story, so he had a story for every occasion. And in drawing upon common experience and common knowledge, building his stories about local characters, traits, and incidents, he was following the example of traditional humor, which is always putting new wine in old bottles and giving local application to universal jests. He was also obeying his advice to lawyers: "Don't shoot too high. Aim low, and the common people will understand you."

While Lincoln said truthfully, "I don't make the stories mine by telling them, I'm only a retail dealer," he became the hero of other stories told of him. The two kinds of "Lincoln stories" are the warp and woof of the Lincoln legend.

## ALWAYS BELITTLING

Besides the social and the practical anecdote, another characteristic development of American story-telling and humor as a weapon is the ribbing anecdote. To get a rise out of someone, pull his leg, take the wind out of his sails, or take him down a peg, is the purpose of the joke, verbal or practical, as an instrument of attack or defense. Traditional butts of practical jokes and subjects of jests are the dupe or gullible fool and the ignoramus or brash greenhorn. Both have been at home in the "individual competitive aggressiveness" of America, especially on the frontier. Hence the great number of stories in which the tenderfoot, stranger, or tourist is made the victim or scapegoat of hoaxing, pranking deception (e.g., the badger fight and the snipe hunt). The fool's errand (sending a green hand in search of a mythical object) is a favorite diversion and story motif among workers in various occupations, as is traditional feuding between rival occupations (e.g., cattlemen and sheepmen).[1]

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[1] Cf. *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*, pp. 269, 273.

Just as even a verbal sally of aggressive humor may take on the aspect of a practical joke, so the practical joke may take the form of a catch or circular tale or falsifying narrative (e.g., stories of fearsome critters). In the early nineteenth century the feud between the backwoodsman and the Yankee peddler who sold him things he didn't want assumed the proportions of a legendary, heroi-comic battle of wits, and master and slave also served as a foil and scapegoat for each other's wit and cunning in the humorous folk tales of John's "scrapes and tight squeezes" (turning the tables on Old Massa, winning freedom by wager, stratagem, etc.[2]). In the same way Negro folklore has made the Irishman the embodiment of absurd ignorance or misunderstanding, as in the story (told about both a Negro and an Irish hunter) of the numskull who refuses to shoot at a deer which he takes to be a man with a chair on his head.[3]

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[1] See "Pranks and Tricks," *A Treasury of American Folklore,* pp. 358-406.

[2] *A Treasury of American Folklore,* pp. 442-447; *A Treasury of Southern Folklore,* pp. 69-76.

[3] *A Treasury of American Folklore,* p. 454.

## LITTLE AUDREY JUST LAUGHED AND LAUGHED

In the humor of cleverness and stupidity the line between the two is often shown to be a thin and shifting one. The simple rustic or good-natured greenhorn, concealing native wit and sagacity under his apparent or assumed simplicity, may turn the tables on his tormentor and prove that he too, knows a thing or two. In stories of sharp trading and close dealing the shrewd merchant or peddler may be beaten at his own game. Thus the clever person may prove too smart for his own good and the comic countryman or rustic clown may prove to be more rogue than fool. In the same way even the simpleton may show occasional glimmerings of intelligence and the impractical philosopher has in common with the ignoramus a sublime disregard of facts.

In the Thirties and Forties the embodiment of absurd misunderstanding was celebrated as Little Moron, a more lovable dunce than his predecessor of the Twenties, Dumb Dora (she was so dumb that she thought Rudy Vallee was a place between two hills). What makes the droll little moron so human is that he is a symbol of the helpless little man with two left feet, who is always putting both feet in it—the Great American Hero turned upside down, with an implied take-off on and protest against his superman efficiency. And who shall say whether Little Moron is wisely foolish or foolishly wise?

A close relative of Little Moron, Little Audrey, is similarly infected with the spirit of the pun and the wisecrack[1] (to which the anecdote seems continually to be reverting atavistically) and the frontier spirit of practical joking and "laughing it off"—"always belittling." In refusing to take life or herself seriously, Little Audrey suggests Peck's Bad Boy, save that, with few exceptions, her jokes are verbal rather than practical. The cute cut-up and smart aleck, enfant terrible and problem child, has become a sadistic little brat who enjoys other people's (and even her own) misfortunes and mistakes. When catastrophe overtakes a member of her family, she just laughs and laughs because—and then follows a corny, punning wisecrack. The grim, quaint irony of Little Audrey, in the face of life's little ironies, is part of the incongruous and topsy-turvy quality of American humor (sometimes traced to our Puritan heritage), which takes as much delight in seeing comedy in unfunny things as it does in delivering jokes with the utmost gravity.

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[1] See *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 409-410, 464-488.

## TALK ABOUT YOUR SLOW TRAINS THROUGH ARKANSAW

Ever since anecdotes (literally, unpublished or "secret" history) have gratified curiosity and love of gossip, about real or fictitious characters, they have been used to illustrate traits of individuals and groups. In America the sharpened sense of local differences flowing from geographical diversity, mobility of population, and commercial rivalry has flowered in a large body of local anecdotes and sayings which are part of the geography of culture and the folklore of place. Poking fun at proverbial types and characteristics, these local cracks and slams are born of local pride and prejudice and the universal tendency of people of one district to distrust and dislike those of neighboring districts. Thus the inhabitants of certain villages like Gotham have been traditionally regarded as outrageous fools, and national traits, such as the parsimony of the Scotch, have been lampooned as heartlessly and tiresomely as stage dialects. In America the Yankee has attracted to himself more myths and libels than perhaps any other regional stereotype. Various cities and states—Boston, Brooklyn, Missouri, Arkansas—have come in for their share of ribbing, along with California and Florida boosters and climate, Texas bigness and bragging. Taunts and gibes dealing with stereotypes of climate and topography—dry, wet, flat, or hilly country—represent a kind of boosting in reverse, the product of disillusionment and "laughing it off."[1]

Perhaps the most famous bit of local libel in America is "The Arkansas Traveler," a synthesis of the humor of cleverness and stupidity found in anecdotes (puns, paradoxes, misunderstandings, retorts, the outwitting of the socially superior by the socially inferior). The dialogue between the lost and bewildered Traveler on horseback and the shiftless, stubborn Squatter fiddling in front of his cabin is another comic contest of wits on the vaudeville level, in the tradition of the harassed traveler and crotchety innkeeper or the inquisitive stranger and the suspicious native. The Arkansas of the piece is really the mythical "Arkansaw," a symbol of the backwoods as a "state of society where rusticity reigns supreme."[2] Its humor is rural humor, such as has been entertaining American audiences from the first stage Yankee (Jonathan, in *The Contrast*) to Lum and Abner, with the cagey hillbilly ringing the changes on such rural jests as the leaky roof that can't be repaired in wet weather and doesn't need repairing in dry weather and the presence of a good road several feet below the mud. Rapid-fire, sure-fire stuff. Partly because of its dramatic form and partly because of the catchy fiddle tune to which it has given its name, "The Arkansas Traveler" surpasses, in the realism and whimsy of its fooling, all the other Arkansas anecdotes and jests about slow trains and razorback hogs. If one had to give up all but a single piece of native American humor, one would be hard put to it to choose between "The Arkansas Traveler" and "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County."

—B. A. B.

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[1] See "Local Cracks and Slams," *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 317-356.

[2] See James R. Masterson, *Tall Tales of Arkansaw* (1942).

## Cheating a Greenhorn

Then old Packsaddle Jack got to telling about Senator Dorsey, of Star Route fame, selling a little herd of cattle he had in northern New Mexico. He said the Senator had got hold of some eyeglass Englishmen, and, representing to them that he had a large herd of cattle, finally made a sale at $25 a head all around. The Englishmen however, insisted on counting the herd and wouldn't take the Senator's books for them. Dorsey agreed to this; he then went to his foreman, Jack Hill.

"Jack," he said, "I want you to find me a small mountain around which a herd of cattle can be circled several times in one day. This mountain must have a kind of natural stand where men can get a good count on cattle stringing by but where they can't possibly get a view of what is going on outside. Sabe?"

Jack selected a little round mountain with a canyon on one side of it. Here on the bank of the canyon he stationed the Englishmen and their bookkeepers and Senator Dorsey. The Senator had only about 1,000 cattle, and these Jack and the cowboys separated into two bunches out in the hills. Keeping the two herds about a mile apart, they now drove the first herd into the canyon. . . . It was hardly out of sight before the second bunch came stringing along. Meantime

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From *Cowboy Life on the Sidetrack*, Being an Extremely Humorous and Sarcastic Story of the Trials and Tribulations Endured by a Party of Stockmen Making a Shipment from the West to the East, by Frank Benton, Cheyenne, Wyoming, pp. 48-52. Copyright, 1903, Denver, Colorado: The Western Stories Syndicate.

The average old time range man would not have known a "folk-tale," by name, from Adam's off ox; just the same the open range was "lousy" with folk-tales, and one of them was about the way a cowman sold cattle to a greenhorn and in delivering them had the buyer count the same animals over and over. This tale has been told many times in connection with many cowmen and many greenhorns—generally some unnamed Englishman; but perhaps the best of all versions of the yarn fastens the trick on Senator Dorsey.—J. Frank Dobie, *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* (Dallas, 1929), p. 165.

cowboys galloped the first herd around back of the mountain and had them coming down the canyon past the Englishmen again for a second count. And they were hardly out of sight before the second division was around the mountain and coming along to be tallied again. Thus the good work went on all morning, the Senator and the Englishmen having only a few minutes to snatch a bite and tap fresh bottles.

At noon Dorsey's foreman told the English party that his men were yet holding an enormous herd back in the hills from which they were cutting off these small bunches of 500 and bringing them along to be tallied. But about three o'clock in the afternoon the cattle began to get thirsty and footsore. Every critter had already traveled thirty miles that day, and lots of them began to drop out and lie down. In one of the herds was an old yellow steer. He was bobtailed, lophorned, and had a game leg. When for the fifteenth time he limped by the crowd that was counting, milord screwed his eyeglass a little tighter on his eye and says:

"There is more bloody, blarsted, lophorned, bobtailed, yellow crippled brutes than anything else, it seems."

Milord's dogrobber speaks up and says, "But, me lord, there's no hanimal like 'im hin the other 'erd."

The Senator overheard this interesting conversation, and, taking the foreman aside, told him when they got that herd on the other side of the mountain again to cut out the old yellow reprobate and not let him come by again. So Jack cut him out and ran him off a ways. But old yellow had got trained to going around that mountain, and the herd wasn't any more than tallied again till here come old Buck, as the cowboys called him, limping down the canyon, the Englishmen staring at him with open mouths and Senator Dorsey looking at old Jack Hill in a reproachful, grieved kind of way. The cowboys ran old Buck off still farther next time, but half an hour afterwards he appeared over a little rise and slowly limped by again.

The Senator now announced that there was only one herd more to count and signalled to Jack to ride around and stop the cowboys. . . . But as the party broke up and started for the ranch, old Buck came by again, looking like he was in a trance. That night the cowboys said the Senator was groaning in his sleep in a frightful way, and when one of them woke him up and asked if he was sick, he told them, while big drops of cold sweat dropped off his face, that he'd had a terrible nightmare. He said that he thought he was yoked up with a yellow, bobtailed, lophorned, lame steer and was being dragged by the animal through a canyon and around a mountain, day after day, in a hot, broiling sun, while crowds of witless Englishmen and gibbering cowboys were looking on. He insisted on saddling up and going back through the moonlight to the mountain to see if old Buck was still there. A cowboy went with him and after they had got to the canyon and waited a while they heard something coming. Sure enough, directly in the bright moonlight they saw old Buck painfully limping along, stopping now and then to rest.

A week later a cowboy reported finding old Buck dead on his well-worn trail. No one ever rides that way on moonlight nights now, for the cowboys have a tradition that during each full moon old Buck's ghost still limps down the canyon.

## Anecdotes from the Brazos Bottoms

### WEATHER PROPHETS

It has been said that George B. Erath, the famous German pioneer and Indian fighter, was the author of the expression:

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From "Anecdotes from the Brazos Bottoms," by A. W. Eddins, *Straight Texas*, Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Number XIII, 1937, edited by J. Frank Dobie and Mody C. Boatright, pp. 86-105 *passim*. Copyright, 1937, by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Austin.

"Nobody prophesies about Texas weather except newcomers and damn fools."

For many years this has been a favorite gag in Texas social life. It was one of the sells in the old saloon days, and the unfortunate tenderfoot who fell for it always had to set up the drinks to the crowd.

One dull, slow evening when things were at an absolute standstill in the saloon, a fresh young guy with a derby hat and store-bought clothes breezed into the place, walked up to the bar, and ordered a drink. The usual crowd of loafers looked on disapprovingly but said nothing. Leisurely finishing his drink and wiping his mouth with a bright silk handkerchief, the newcomer said, "Well, I believe it's going to rain."

The golden opportunity had arrived; the whole crowd was alert and watchful. Then the old nester, the leader in all the local wars of wits, said very fatherly, "My friend, did you know that there were only two kinds of people who prophesy about Texas weather?"

"Two kinds of people who prophesy on Texas weather?" mused the stranger. "That's very queer. Who are they?"

Then the old nester, with all the contempt and sarcasm in his power, sneered, "Newcomers and damn fools."

The crowd rose with a mighty shout and gathered around the newcomer shouting, "Haw, haw, haw." "He got you that time." "You are it." "He got you good." "Set um up. Set um up." "You owe the drinks to the house." "Come on, set um up."

The young fellow stood smiling at all their hurrah. He was not the least troubled about their demands for the drinks. When the hubbub had died down and they were all properly up against the bar, he said very calmly and slowly, "You say there are only two kinds of people who prophesy about Texas weather—newcomers and damn fools. You are right. Those are the only two kinds in Texas."

## ALL FACE

On a cold dreary day an Indian and a white man were making a journey together. The Indian had on no clothing except a blanket, while the white man was bundled up in all the clothes he possessed. The white man continued to complain about the cold and to wonder why the Indian was not freezing. He said to the Indian, "I don't understand it. With all my clothes I am about to freeze, and you, with only a thin blanket, do not seem to be cold at all."

"Is your face cold?" asked the Indian.

"No, my face is not cold, but I'm just about to freeze everywhere else."

"Me all face," said the Indian.

## PREDESTINATION FOR THE INDIAN

In the early days of the Republic of Texas when the Indians were especially bad, an old Primitive Baptist preacher was preparing for a long trip across the Indian country. He was especially careful in cleaning and loading the long rifle that was to accompany him. A friend, seeing his preparation and knowing his belief in predestination, said to him, "Uncle Billie, why are you so careful about your gun? If you meet the Indians and you are predestined to die at that time, why you will die anyway; so why worry about the gun? 'What is to be will be anyway,' you know."

"Yes, I know all about that," said Uncle Billie, "but it might be the Indian's time."

## CONTRADICTORY DREAM REVELATIONS

It is said of this same minister that a notorious character of the community thought he would be able to take advantage of him because of his belief in mystic visions. So one morning he drove his wagon up to Uncle Billie's crib and said to him, "The Lord told me in a dream last night to come to your crib and get a load of corn."

Uncle Billie reached up over the door and took down his long rifle and said, "Yes, but the Lord must have changed His mind, for He told me this morning not to let you have it."

## G. P. C.

The church was in an uproar. The congregation was badly divided on the question of whether or not they should grant a certain young brother, whose reputation for piety was none too good, a license to preach.

A few of the older conservative members were a little doubtful about the sudden call to the ministry, and wanted to put him off until they could be a little surer about the reality of the call. Many of the younger brethren were very enthusiastic about the wonderful conversion and vocation of the applicant. They thought a real miracle had happened, and they were anxious to see him licensed and put to work in the Lord's vineyard. They recounted with great seriousness how, according to the young man's own testimony, the Lord had appeared to him in a vision and had shown him the three letters "G. P. C." flaming in the sky, and how a still small voice had said, "Follow these." There could be no doubt about the interpretation. G. P. C. meant "Go Preach Christ." And the young man should be sent on his way.

But the old deacon was on his feet, replying, "Brethren, I do not deny the vision. I am sure that the Lord has spoken to this young man. But knowing this young man as I do, and appreciating to some degree the great wisdom of the Lord, I am sure that you all misinterpret what this vision meant. 'G. P. C.' in this case can only mean, 'Go Pick Cotton.' "

### AIN'T LOST

A fine city man had a brand-new buggy and a prize-winning pair of trotters that he wished to try out. He drove along the country roads, speeding a little here and walking a little there, studying the good points and admiring the beauty of his new rig. He was so delighted with the prospect that he failed to notice the road. Later on he realized that he was lost, but he hoped by driving on to find his way, or at least to meet someone who could tell him how to get back to the city.

But it was a long lonesome road. For a long time he followed the windings, hoping every hilltop would bring him within sight of some dwelling. When it was almost dark he saw in front of him a cotton patch and a good-sized country boy chopping away in the rows. He reined his tired team near the fence and called out, "Hello, boy."

"Hello yourself," the boy replied, still wielding his hoe.

"Where does this road go to?"

"Hain't never seed it go nowhars. Hit allus stays right whar hit is," said the boy, still digging away.

"How far is it to the next town?"

"Don't know; never measured it," replied the boy.

Thoroughly disgusted, the man said with some heat, "You don't know anything. You are certainly the biggest fool I ever saw."

The boy looked a long time in the man's eyes; then he said with contempt, "I knows I don't know nothing. I knows I'se a fool. But I ain't lost."

## Pioneer Folk Tales

### YALLER BREAD

The "yaller bread" incident preluded an "infare" dinner

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From "Pioneer Folk Tales," by Mary Jourdan Atkinson and J. Frank Dobie, that was being prepared for a newly wedded couple. The table was set but the company was not due to arrive for an hour or so when the ladies of the house found their hospitality required by an unexpected guest. He was a man living some miles "up the creek" who had obligingly stopped on his way home from the mill below to deliver a supply of freshly ground cornmeal. He was a person of considerable ignorance and of little consequence, and his presence was not desired at the wedding dinner; nevertheless, custom demanded that he leave the house with his appetite satisfied and his feelings uninjured. It was decided to say nothing of the impending sociable, and the hostess graciously suggested that he sit down and eat immediately so that he should not be delayed on his long ride home. The man sat down at his ease and began eating. In fact, he made so free with the good things on the table that he was obliged to let his belt out notch by notch until finally he got up and took it off. He hung it on the back of his chair and forgot to put it on again when the meal was over. But that omission was not the worst of his backwoods violations of good manners.

As he ate on, he seemed to relish in particular a huge plate of sliced pound cake. He kept spreading the pieces thick with butter and making away with them, while he ate chicken, beef, venison, and other solid food, until the hostess, alarmed at the rate at which her cherished and rare cake was disappearing, pressed him to take some biscuits. With white flour at a premium, biscuits, as well as cake, were a

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*Foller De Drinkin' Gou'd*, Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Number VII, edited by J. Frank Dobie, pp. 69-70, 71. Copyright, 1928, by The Texas Folk-Lore Society. Austin.

One class of these early day folk narratives—a class now rapidly disappearing as a result of luxuries—was designed to teach the children manners—a purpose that has inspired children's stories from time immemorial. Besides educating their offspring in the ways of general courtesy, the pioneer parents, particularly of the better class of settlers, felt it necessary to inform them concerning the elegancies of civilization that had been left behind. Naturally the burden of this instruction was borne by the mother. The settlements became "alive" with stories ridiculing the backwoodsman and enforcing the rules of etiquette.—M. J. A. and J. F. D.

delicacy, a luxury; cornbread was the staple breadstuff. Surely, thought the hostess, the biscuits will divert him from the pound cake.

But the backwoodsman, apparently with perfect sincerity, waved them away. "No thank you, ma'am," he said. "You just save them there biscuits. This here yaller bread is good enough for me."

### THE WOVEN RUG

A boy was sent by his parents to the home of some new and well-to-do neighbors. He had been used to deer skins and bull hides for carpets, and when he was invited into the elegantly furnished parlor of his hosts, he was very much intimidated. By sidling around the edge of the floor, he managed to get to a chair without walking on a rug that covered most of the floor space. When he left a few moments later he got out of the room by the same circuitous route.

"Well, son, how did you like our new neighbors?" his mother inquired when he got back home.

"Oh," the boy replied, "the lady seemed to be mighty nice, but she is terrible car'less like. Why, she had a fine piece of cloth spread right out in the middle of the floor, and danged if she didn't put her foot right down on it. But I knowed better than to do anything like that and so managed to hop around and keep from steppin' on it."

## A Sheepherder from Yale

Reed & Cashion and other sheepmen come down here into Happy Valley every spring to lamb and shear—the sheep, I mean, not Reed & Cashion or the sheepmen; also to eat up all of Mrs. Peck's cow feed and help out some of the

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From *Salome Sun*, Vol. 3, No. 2, February, 1922. Dick Wick Hall, Editor and Miner. Salome, Arizona.

poor people around Wenden, the side track 5 miles up the line from Salome, the Mining Metropolis.

Algernon McGoogle—"Hotfoot Mac" they called him at Yale, on account of his sprinting ability—also came out here this spring, on account of his health, having exercised too much in his BVD's while training to beat the 100 yard record, and taken a bad cold, which settled on his lungs, so the doctors ordered Arizona and outdoor life for Mac. Mac had lived all his life in the city and Happy Valley, Arizona was a new experience to him.

Mac landed in Happy Valley soon after the sheep—and he has been after them most of the time since, he says. Reed was short of herders and Mac was short of cash, and Scotch by descent, so Mac was soon hired to herd a band of about 2,000 ba ba's. It is customary to herd the sheep around the desert among the greasewood and sage brush during the day, bringing them back to the corrals at night on account of the coyotes.

Mac was started out the first morning with his band and instructed to wander along slowly toward a little butte several miles away, letting the sheep feed as they went along, and to start back towards camp so as to get in before dark. "Try and get them back here by five o'clock," Reed called to him as he left, "and don't let any of the lambs get away from the band," he added jokingly, as there were no lambs in the band and the ewes were not due to lamb for several weeks yet.

The sheep and Mac soon disappeared in the brush and nothing more was thought of them until supper time came and no sign of Mac or the sheep. Reed commenced to worry, about the sheep, and about seven o'clock was about to start out looking for them when Mac at last came driving them up through the brush into the corral and, after shutting them in, came up to the chuck tent, streaked with dust and perspiration and, from all appearances, tired out. Before Reed could say anything, Mac burst out:

"Boss," he said, "I'm through. They thought back east that I was a foot racer, but I'm not. Almost any sheepherder that can herd that band for a week and not lose those lambs can beat all thé world's records. I didn't lose any today and I ran every one of those damn lambs back into the band every time they tried to get away, but one day is enough for me. I'm all in, but they are all there. Go and count them up and then give me my time. I'm done."

Reed, knowing that there were no lambs in the band and that none of the ewes could have lambed yet, went down to the corral to investigate and, off in one corner, huddled up by themselves, he counted 47 jackrabbits and 16 cottontails.

## The Essence of Rural Humor

The scene is Kennicott's store at Blue Eye, a situation but slightly commercial. The group includes Dave Beatty, Forgy Dell, Marcus Feitz, Henstep Creaseley, Tola Summerlin, Homer Bullteeter, Homer's hired boy Bill Skeats, and the storekeeper. These occupy poultry crates and such. They whittle matches into infinitesimal slivers. They draw strange diagrams on the dusty porch floor and whistle tunes that take after nothing in particular. They indulge in slight sounds, slow gyrations, slight parleyings, patterings of feet, uproarious yawnings, and stretchings in the form of capital Xs and Ys.

Their relish for the wisecrack inevitably forthcoming is enhanced a dozenfold by such interludes of speculative waiting. The first spiel is by Bill Skeats, since hired boys are among the most cherished perpetrators of store-porch mirth.

Bill Skeats, then, sitting in sunny oblivion on the lowest estate of the store-porch steps, opens in dialect at his boss:

"Homer, how's hit do for me to ride your hoss home?"

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From *Backwoods America*, by Charles Morrow Wilson, pp. 15-26. Copyright, 1934, by the University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill.

The employer quivers slightly.

"It wouldn't do so good, I've got to ride him myse'f." Then with a soft ripple of merriment: "Mought be you could walk alongside me though."

"No, I reckon I'd better jest be pattin' down the road now by myself. If I was to walk aside you, I'd have to open and shet ever' gate and fence-gap between here and thar."

There is freely given laughter. The afternoon flow of jocundity has started. Homer faces unsteadily towards his lolling hired help.

"By the way, how come you ain't workin' today?"

The youth deliberately readjusts his battered felt hat and leers.

"W'y, I was workin' but I got hurt. You see I was plowin' corn in that fur squirrel patch and drekly I come to the field—I fell off—and wrenched my knee."

Backbrush humor hangs upon pegs that are unashamedly obvious: the old gentleman who can't get any satisfaction out of reading the dictionary because it changes the subject too often; the itinerant parson who agrees that a spring wagon and a span of mules are fool proof, but not necessarily damn-fool proof; the upbrush politician who craves a postmastership within easy walking distance of a distillery; the clodhopper who overwhelms the school-teacher's suggestion that the burning of Mart Miller's barn must have been the work of an incendiary with, "Incendiary, hell! Somebody sot it."

The humor carries an amiable plenitude, too, of anecdotes of stupidity.

The sheriff of a brush county in Southwestern Missouri was forming a posse to recapture a depraved culprit who had broken jail while the defender of justice was away investigating. A store-porch commentator reported that the fugitive had spent half the afternoon strolling about the village; that he had last been seen taking out westward down the old wire road. Then the observing countryman added that he had seen the sheriff pass by the escaped prisoner not an hour before. The upholder of sovereign justice admitted it.

"Oh, yes, yes! I seed him all right—passed him on the town branch bridge a while after dinner time—passed him and spoke howdy to him. But I didn't know the low hound reprobate was out of jail."

The store-porcher relishes so simple an episode as that of the rural lad and his first banana. The youth from Alpena was taking his first train ride, and when the newsman came through acclaiming "chawklets—bernanners!" the mountain lad invested readily in the latter. On the next round the caller stopped to ask after the qualities of his wares.

"Well, Mister, I can't say so bodaciously much for it. In the first place it was mainly all cob; and when I'd throwed that away, what little they was left was bitter and sort of 'ornery to eat."

Sometimes the gentleman of the store-porch is tickled almost beyond endurance by ignorance of rural ways, by unfamiliarity with the dictates of soil and season which he himself knows so well. The newcomer who figures to get rich off a few slanting acres of stump ground; who would bear down on his plow handles, tie up fodder with string, buckle the throat-latch of a bridle before he set the bit, undertake to keep the birds from his cherries or the squirrels from his corn—such a yahoo provides material for slow perceptive smiles based upon first-hand understanding of the ways and wiles of wooded hill and brushy dale.

The conversation on the store-porch drifted around to the chinch bugs, which had descended upon the tasseling corn in leeching multitudes. The drummer from Saint Looie wanted to know what a chinch bug looked like.

"You say it's no bigger than a seed tick?"

Nods and salivary assent.

"Why, I wouldn't have my crops wiped out by a little thing like that."

The sitters nudged one another and one soberly asked what the commercial ambassador might figure to do about it.

"Do about it? Why, I'd get me a good two-handed brush and frail 'em off my place."

The store-porch humorist is not, of course, above a pun. An old codger from Red Star was telling of his family.

"Yes, suh, they come three boys, then a girl, then another boy. So I named 'em Matthew, Mark, Luke, Ann, John."

And he knows the value of hyperbole. One time I asked an old countryman why he preferred cushaws (large hooked squashes) to pumpkins. He spat.

"Well suh, if I was to grow punkins on them slopin' fields, they'd likely break loose from the vines and roll down and kill somebody. But cushaws—they hook theirselves to corn stalks and ketch on."

Nor is the store humorist immune to the potency of slapstick. There is no good reason why he should be. Mimicry can also put him into the high rhapsodies of mirth. And the countryside idiot is a dependable source of laughter.

The rural commoner likewise is amused at the plight of the singing master who started to cross Brush Creek by means of a log bridge, and went to where the log bridge wasn't. There moonlight and a black shadow had fallen across the way, so the singing master, mistaking the shadow for the bridge, decided that he would just hunker down and 'coon across it. So he knelt, putting his elbows forward and painstakingly plunged head first into a stream of ice-cold water.

Backwoods fondness for burlesque mingles mirthfully with the liking for the humor of ignorance. For that very reason countrymen enjoy country jokes and relish the opportunity for embellishment and parody.

"You know, over at Post Oak Hill where we come from, that there's the reel brush. Pap Eason he's about the only feller down that there creek bend as knows how to read and write. So about seven or eight of us chipped in and taken the Springfield newspaper, figgerin' as how Pap could read it to us.

"Well, we done hit, and one day we was settin' around listenin' and Pap was readin' about where the paper said as how ever'body ought to plant a lot of corn and plow hit a lot because some mighty bad droughts was comin'. Mart Miller set and puzzled awhile and then he says:

" 'Pap, what's a drought?'

"Pap chawed his terbaccer a minute and stroked his chin-whiskers and then says:

'Well, I couldn't be jest shore, but if I ain't mighty mistaken, a drought is one of them new-fangled varmints that's a cross betwixt a coon and a wildcat. Anyhow they shore is hell on corn.' "

Another tale of the same timbre tells of a rural countryside in the throes of a summertime political campaign. Squire Techstone was running for circuit clerk against a slicked-up county seat lawyer. The two were orating at an August picnic. The legal member was offering belligerent argument.

"That man is as ignorant of the law as he is of the responsibilities of office. I would even defy my opponent to define so simple a legal term as *habeas corpus*."

Squire Techstone lifted off his battered felt hat and cogitated.

"Well, unless I'm mighty fur wrong that term means a red Jersey heifer fresh with a first calf."

There are rural epics of the sort that came about when Newt Finnen's wife prevailed upon Newt to take all their children to the protracted meeting.

"Newt said he couldn't rightfully bear to set and listen to preachin's, but one time his wife got come over with holiness and she hawg-an'-pantered him till he had to take her an' the young 'uns to meetin'. Newt set out on the back porch till the preachin' was all over, then he commenced gettin' oneasy about was the young 'uns still there. He figgered he'd better round 'em up. So he strolled inside and brushed back the black bristles from his forehead and says,

" 'Emmy, Dan'l, Sady, Jude, Prosey, Tom, Virgil, Dessie, Newtie, Violeeny, you-all here?'

"They says, 'Yes, Pa, we're here.'

"So then Newt lined 'em up and struck out for home."

There are times when the edge of satire may become a bit cutting. A countryside revival meeting had reached the stage of spiritual orgies. The parson preached, the congregation rolled and grovelled and kicked up straw. Then came the hour for testifying.

Brother Amos, the countryside cripple, squatted upon a convenient corner bench. He was a paralytic, an invalid hopelessly cramped and drawn, with gangling and unruly limbs. During the course of the testifying the parson called upon the crippled one to rise and tell what the Lord had done for him.

Brother Amos roused jerkily, raised his chin a bare inch from his chest in painful deliberation and struggled to manipulate his lagging limbs. There was a silence of expectation and awaited revelation. Then the lame one shrilled:

"You was askin' what the Lord done for me. Well, I'll tell you. He jest blamed near ruint me."

The run of store-porch humor is withal a gentle humor, a garnishment for extensive leisure, cornmeal mush, sun and rain, dew and moonlight, and backwoods stillness. It rarely carries bitterness. It may be brusque but it is seldom vengeful. It is rarely ulterior. A man does not use it to sell his hen's eggs, or to acquire a soft job, or to swarm with the village social bees. The peasant laughs because he sees no reason why he shouldn't.

As an example of the kindliness of the humor, there is a recitation dealing with a lad from Gulch Hollow, who on first coming to Eureka, was lured by the tempting yellowness of the store-window lemons. The youth had never seen lemons before and he figured to sample them. So he bought a dime's worth and proceeded to try out the purchase. A first attempt to bite through the tough rind revealed an appalling mistake. But in the sight of a half-dozen onlookers the lad from Gulch Hollow did not once hesitate. He ate the first lemon whole; then the second and third. Nobody laughed. There was not even the suggestion of a smile. The rural youth addressed a sober audience.

"Yessir, fer a considerable spell I've been honin' to get my fill of these here tropical fruits because I shorely do pleasure in the flavor of 'em and now I aim to revel in it."

Then with puckering lips he retreated toward the village pump, his departure unmarred by laughter, his sensitive spirit unchafed.

And one time the folks were having a moonlight supper up at the Brush Ford schoolhouse. Uncle Zeb Hatfield, who hadn't been out to any manner of funmaking in a month of moons, was a bit unsteady about his etiquette, and in consequence chanced to pour buttermilk into his coffee instead of cream. An observing farm wife moved to fetch him another cup. But Uncle Zeb would be the subject of no such bother. He blew at the murky fluid and assured the company that taking buttermilk in coffee was to him an invariable habit. Steady faces accepted that declaration. There was not even an adolescent snigger.

Backwoods humor has its subtle side, too. The commoner from Low Gap is capable of a cerebral chuckle now and then, fully as capable of it as his brethren of the town.

He enjoys his Aunt Lulu Pettigrew's complaint of pains in her abominable muscles, or that most of her family have died of nobility, or that with one of them new Fords her son Wid can climb any manner of mountain in neutral.

He relishes such picturesque generalities as those of Judge Patton of Kentucky, who once offered these instructions to his jury:

"Gentlemen, whenever you see a big overgrown buck a-settin' at the mouth of some holler or the fork of some road, with a big slouch hat on, a blue collar, a celluloid rose in his coat lapel and a banjo strung acrost his chist, fine that man, gentlemen. Fine him! Because if he ain't done somethin' already, he blame soon will."

He enjoys hearing the Tannehill child assure a younger brother that if he will only stop hollerin' he can watch the old gentleman fall off the hay wagon.

He enjoys the strategy of the thrifty old lady of didactic leanings who in remonstrating with some little boys for their stealing a pocketful of pears, assured them that if they would only be forward and honest about it and bring along something in which to carry the fruit home, she would be glad to give them the pears. Five minutes later she was faced by the pack of youngsters who brought an old-style clothes basket capable of holding at least four bushels.

There is an ephemeral freshness to backwoods humor due in part to its nearness to earth; in part to the ways of its perpetrators—their slowness of speech and droll maneuverings of expression; their posture and inflections which cannot be adequately reproduced even in the most accommodating of type.

The great majority of upcountry jests are neither scrupulously original nor sparklingly clever. Often enough a rustic gem will shine for generations. And this fact is easier to understand when one understands that in Elizabethan America one generation is very much like another.

## The Talking Mule

Ole feller one time had uh mule. His name wuz Bill.

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From *Mules and Men*, by Zora Neale Hurston, pp. 217-218. Copyright, 1935, by Zora Neale Hurston. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company.

Every mornin' de man go tuh ketch 'im he say, "Come round, Bill!"

So one mornin' he slept late, so he decided while he wuz drinkin' some coffee he'd send his son tuh ketch Ole Bill.

Told 'im say, "Go down dere, boy, and bring me dat mule up here."

Boy, he sich a fast Aleck, he grabbed de bridle and went on down tuh de lot tuh ketch Ole Bill.

He say, "Come round, Bill!"

De mule looked round at 'im. He told de mule, "Tain't no use you rollin' yo' eyes at *me*. Pa want yuh dis mawnin'. Come on round and stick yo' head in dis bridle."

Mule kept on lookin' at 'im and said, "Every mornin' it's 'Come round, Bill! Come round, Bill!' Don't hardly git no night rest befo' it's 'Come round, Bill!' "

De boy throwed down dat bridle and flew back tuh de house and told his Pa, "Dat mule is talkin'."

"Ah g'wan, boy, tellin' yo' lies! G'wan ketch dat mule."

"Naw suh, Pa, dat mule's done gone tuh talkin'. You hatta ketch dat mule yo' ownself. Ah ain't gwine."

Ole man looked at ole lady and say, "See whut uh lie dat boy is tellin'?"

So he gits out and goes on down after de mule hisself. When he got down dere he hollered, "Come round, Bill!"

Ole mule looked round and says, "Every mornin' it's come round, Bill!"

De ole man had uh little fice dog useter foller 'im everywhere he go, so he lit out wid de lil fice right behind 'im. So he told de ole lady, "De boy ain't told much of uh lie. Dat mule *is* talkin'. Ah never heered uh mule talk befo'."

Lil fice say, "Me neither."

De ole man got skeered agin. Right through de woods he went wid de fice right behind 'im. He nearly run hisself tuh death. He stopped and commenced blowin' and says, "Ah'm so tired Ah don't know whut tuh do."

Lil dog run and set down in front of 'im and went to hasslin'[1] and says, "Me too."

Dat man is runnin' yet.

## God and the Devil in the Cemetery

Two mens dat didn't know how tuh count good had been haulin' up cawn and they stopped at de cemetery wid de last load 'cause it wuz gittin' kinda dark. They thought they'd git thru instead uh goin' 'way tuh one of 'em's barn. When they wuz goin' in de gate two ear uh cawn dropped off de waggin, but they didn't stop tuh bother wid 'em, just then. They wuz in uh big hurry tuh git home. They wuz justa 'vidin' it up. "You take dis'un and Ah'll take dat'un, you take dat'un and Ah'll take dis'un."

An ole nigger heard 'em while he wuz passin' de cemetery an' run home tuh tell ole Massa 'bout it.

"Massa, de Lawd and de devil is down in de cemetery 'vidin' up souls. Ah heard 'em. One say, 'You take that 'un an' Ah'll take dis'un.' "

Ole Massa wuz sick in de easy chear, he couldn't git about by hisself, but he said, "Jack, Ah don't know whut dis foolishness is, but Ah know you lyin'."

"Naw Ah ain't neither, Ah swear it's so."

"Can't be, Jack, youse crazy."

"Naw Ah ain't neither; if you don't believe me, come see for yo'self."

"Guess Ah better go see whut you talkin' 'bout; if you fool me, Ah'm gointer have a hundred lashes put on yo' back in de mawnin' suh."

They went on down tuh de cemetery wid Jack pushin' Massa in his rollin' chear, an' it wuz sho dark down dere too. So they couldn't see de two ears uh cawn layin' in de gate.

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*Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

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[1] Panting.—Z. N. H.

Sho nuff Ole Massa heard 'em sayin', "Ah'll take dis'un," and de other say, "An' Ah'll take dis'un." Ole Massa got skeered hisself but he wuzn't lettin' on, an' Jack whispered tuh 'im, "Unh hunh, didn't Ah tell you de Lawd an' de devil wuz down here 'vidin' up souls?"

They waited awhile there in de gate listenin', den they heard 'em say, "Now, we'll go git dem two at de gate."

Jack says, "Ah knows de Lawd gwine take you, and Ah ain't gwine let de devil get me—Ah'm gwine home." An' he did an' lef' Ole Massa settin' dere at de cemetery gate in his rollin' chear, but when he got home, Ole Massa had done beat 'im home and wuz settin' by de fire smokin' uh seegar.

## Little Moron

### I

The little moron was nailing shingles on the house. Somebody noticed that he was throwing about half the nails away, and asked him why. "Because," said the little moron, "the heads are on the wrong ends." "Well, you dope," said the other, "those are for the other side of the house."

The little moron got up in the middle of the night to answer the telephone. "Is this one one one one?" says the voice. "No, this is eleven eleven." "You're sure it isn't one one one one?" "No, this is eleven eleven." "Well, wrong number. Sorry to have got you up in the middle of the night." "That's all right, mister. I had to get up to answer the telephone anyway."

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From "'Little Moron' Stories," by Ernest W. Baughman, *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, edited by Herbert Halpert, Vol. II (June, 1943), No. 1, pp. 17-18.

These stories were heard by my sister, Ruth Baughman, from students on the campus of Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana, during the past year. Since then I have heard them in many localities. Such jokes seem to circulate orally among city people, office workers and college people in particular. Most of these stories would probably be classified by Professor Stith Thompson in his Motif-Index under *Absurd Misunderstandings*. Some of the people I have heard seem to make a specialty of telling stories of this type which depend on gestures for their effectiveness. I have not included any of this type.—E. W. B.

Cf. *Little Moron*, by Abbott ("Heck") Hoecker and Clydene ("Ilda") Oliver (1943).

Two little morons went hunting. The first one shot at a duck, and when it fell at his feet he felt bad that the little duck had died when he shot it. The other said, "Oh, don't feel so bad. The fall would have killed it anyway."

Little moron was painting the house when another one came up and said, "Got a good hold on that brush?" "Yep." "Well, if you are sure you got a good hold on that brush I'll borrow your ladder for a second." "O.K. but don't keep it long. The handle of this paint brush is kind of slippery."

Little moron's wife sent him down town after a bucket of ice. He came back with a pail of water. "I got this for half price because it was melted."

Little moron took two slices of bread and went down and sat on the street corner waiting for the traffic jam. A big truck came along and gave him a jar.

Why did the little moron go to the lumber yard?—To look for his draft board.

Then there was the little moron who broke his leg when he threw his cigarette butt down the manhole and tried to step on it.

And the one who took his nose apart to see what made it run.

Little moron tried to light his cigarette. He struck the first match on the seat of his pants, but it wouldn't light. He tried another. It wouldn't light. The third one finally lit. He lit his cigarette, carefully blew the match out and put it in his vest pocket. "What for did you put that match in your vest pocket?" "That's a good match. I'll use it again."

Two little morons were in jail. They were trying to find a way out. "I know. I'll shine the flash light up to that window, you crawl up the beam and open that window." The other little moron objected. "Nothing doing. I'd get halfway up the beam and you'd turn the light off."

## II

Why did the little moron lock his papa in the icebox? Because he wanted cold pop.

Do you know why the little moron took some hay to bed with him? Because he wanted to feed his nightmare.

Can you tell me why the little moron took his clock to bed with him? Because it was fast.

What did the little moron do when he was told he was dying? He moved into the living room.

* * * * *

A little moron went to a show. The usher asked him, "Would you like to sit down front?" The little moron answered, "I'm sorry, sir, but I don't bend that way."

And did you hear about the little moron who stayed up all night to study for his blood test? And the little moron who took some sugar and cream with him to the movie because he heard there was going to be a serial? And the little moron who saved burnt-out light bulbs to use during blackouts? And the little moron who took some pepper out with him because he heard it was hot stuff? And the little moron who ate some dynamite so his hair would grow out with bangs? And the little moron who put a chair in the coffin for rigor mortis to set in? And the little moron who slept on the chandelier because he was a light sleeper? And the little moron who went to a football game because he thought a quarterback was a refund? And the little moron who took off his knee cap to see if there was any beer in the joint? And the little moron who sat up all night on his wedding night gazing out of the window because his mother had told him it would be the most wonderful night he ever saw?

There were two little morons who were waiting for a

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From "The Demise of the Little Moron," by Rudolph Umland, *Esquire*, The Magazine for Men, Vol. XX (September, 1943), No. 3, pp. 32-33, 154-155. Copyright, 1943, by Esquire, Inc.

streetcar. One asked the other if he thought the car had already gone. "Yes, it must have gone," the other exclaimed. "There's its tracks!"

Did you hear about the little moron who cut his arms off? He wanted to wear a sleeveless sweater.

Did you hear about the little moron bride who sat down and cried bitterly when her husband went out to shoot craps? She didn't know how to cook them.

Did you hear about the little moron who went strolling along the beach and saw a nude woman come out of the water? He said, "Boy wouldn't she look good in a bathing suit!"

Have you heard about the little moron who was so bashful that he had to go into another room to change his mind?

There was the one about the two little morons who were walking along a railroad track and spied a human arm beside the rails. "That looks like Joe's arm," exclaimed the first little moron. "It is Joe's arm," said the other. They walked a little farther and saw a human leg lying beside the rails. "That looks like Joe's leg," exclaimed the first little moron. "It is Joe's leg," said the other. A short way farther they saw a head lying beside the rails. "That looks like Joe's head," exclaimed the first little moron. "It is Joe's head," said the other little moron, and he stooped, picked the head up by the ears, shook it, and cried, "Joe, Joe, are you hurt?"

Then there was the one about a group of little morons who were building a house. One of the little morons went to the boss and asked if they should start building the house from the top down or from the bottom up. "Why, start from the bottom and build up, of course!" replied the boss. The little moron turned and yelled to his fellow workers: "Tear 'er down, boys! Gotta start all over!"

The little moron told his friend, "I only weighed three pounds when I was born." "Did you live?" asked the friend. "Did I live! Say, you oughta see me now!"

## The Adventures of Little Audrey

Little Audrey is a folklore character about whom thousands of nonsensical short tales—during the past five or six years—have been told. Sometimes Little Audrey parades as Little Emma or Little Gertrude, but she usually is recognizable by a catch phrase—"she just laughed and laughed." The amusing incident is typically a catastrophe. Little Audrey sees the humor in any situation.

A nice thing about Little Audrey is her integrity. She is no hypocrite; she does what she wants to do, says what she wants to say, and makes no bones about it. Little Audrey will never have inhibitions. Further, she is a very modern girl. She is having new adventures constantly, as indicated by the puns on floating power automobiles and the carioca dance steps. To her, irony predominates over sentiment. She has few illusions.

Little Audrey is nation-wide in distribution. In Texas she is well-known, particularly in universities and high schools. Approximately one out of ten students is a Little Audrey fan with a number of her adventures tucked away in his mind. The following are some of the stories known and collected by the author.

Little Audrey and her papa were out riding one day in their new streamlined car. Papa was proud of the car, and he was giving it the gas; he wanted to see how much it would make. All of a sudden the road turned, but papa did not; he went straight on and into the lake. Little Audrey saw what was going to happen, and she just laughed and laughed. She knew all of the time that their car had floating power.

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By Cornelia Chambers. From *Straight Texas,* Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Number XIII, 1937, edited by J. Frank Dobie and Mody C. Boatright, pp. 106-110. Copyright, 1937, by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Austin.

Once upon a time all the children in Little Audrey's neighborhood were taking lessons. It was the proper thing to do; if you did not take lessons, you simply were not in the social swim. So Little Audrey cried and cried, 'cause she was not taking lessons.

After a while her mama said, "Little Audrey, if you will just stop that bawling, I'll let you take lessons." That made Little Audrey awful happy; so she sat down to think about what kind of lessons she would take. Well, after a long time she decided to take parachute lessons. So Little Audrey practiced and practiced, and after a while it was time to give her recital; you know if you take lessons you just have to give recitals.

Well, people came from far and near to see Little Audrey parachute jump. She went way up high in the airplane and got ready to jump. She looked down and saw all those people watching her, and then she jumped out. On her way down she just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew she was going to fool those people; she didn't have on her parachute.

Once upon a time Little Audrey got lost on a desert island. Along came a big bunch of black cannibals and kidnapped her. They tied her up to a tree and started their pot to boiling. Little Audrey knew they were going to make stew out of her; so she looked around at those lean, hungry cannibals and counted them. There were nineteen. Little Audrey just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew she was not big enough to make enough stew to go around.

One day Little Audrey and her mother went for a walk in the forest where some lumbermen were felling trees. Just as they came along, the men cut down a big oak, and it fell right on mother! Little Audrey just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew all the time that Mother couldn't carioca.

That night Little Audrey and her mama and papa and her little brunette sister were sitting at the dinner table. Papa said, "Little Audrey, pass the cream, please." So Little

Audrey passed the cream to her papa, and he poured some into his coffee. Then he put the pitcher down, and Little Audrey noticed that right on the tip end of the spout there was a little drop of cream all ready to fall. Little Audrey just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew all the time that the little cream pitcher couldn't go *sniff, sniff*.

One day Little Audrey was standing on the corner just a-crying and a-crying, when along comes a cop, who said, "Little Audrey, why are you crying?" And Little Audrey said, "Oh, I've lost my papa!" The cop said, "Why, Little Audrey, I wouldn't cry about that. There's your papa right across the street leaning against that bank building." Little Audrey was overjoyed; without even looking at the traffic she started across the street. Along came a big two-ton truck that ran over Little Audrey and killed her dead. The cop just laughed and laughed. He knew all the time that that was not Little Audrey's papa leaning against the bank building.

One time Little Audrey and her little brother were inspecting a ship. They went over it from top to bottom, and then little brother decided he wanted to go way up high to the crow's nest. Little Audrey told him he better not go, but he was awful hard-headed; so up he went. When he got up there he waved to Little Audrey, lost his balance, and came tumbling down. Little Audrey looked at the remains and just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew all the time that her brother just could not stand hard ships.

One time Little Audrey took her grandpa out walking. Little Audrey got awful hot; so she said, "Grandpa, let's go down to the old swimming hole and take a swim." But grandpa didn't much want to, 'cause he was blind. But Little Audrey begged and begged, and finally grandpa agreed to go. So they went down to the old swimming hole and put on their bathing suits. There was a big tree, growing out over the water, that the kids used as a diving board. Little Audrey told her grandpa to climb up the tree and dive off.

But he didn't want to; so Little Audrey had to make him. When he jumped off, Little Audrey just laughed and laughed. She knew all the time that the swimming hole had dried up.

Little Audrey's brother was a jailbird. One time when he was up for three years he broke out of jail. The sheriff looked and looked for him, but he couldn't find him anywhere. After about a month the sheriff decided to put the bloodhounds on the trail. And that made Little Audrey just laugh and laugh, 'cause she knew all the time that her brother was anemic.

One day Little Audrey and her mother were driving along when all of a sudden the car door flew open and Little Audrey's mother fell out. Little Audrey just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew all the time that her mother had on her light fall suit.

The nurse was going to take Little Audrey out for a walk; but the nurse was absent-minded, and she forgot until she was outside to take Little Audrey with her. So she called up to the cook and said, "Cook, throw Little Audrey out the window, and I'll catch her on the second bounce." The cook threw Little Audrey out the window and then she just laughed and laughed. She knew all the time that Little Audrey was not a rubber ball.

One day Little Audrey's mama went to town, and while she was gone Little Audrey decided to bake a cake, 'cause she wanted to show her mama how smart she was. She got down the recipe book and mixed the cake according to directions. She sifted the flour, creamed the butter and sugar, beat the eggs, and stirred the ingredients together. Then she was ready to cook the cake; so she looked at the recipe book and it said: "Now set in the oven for thirty minutes." So Little Audrey crawled into the oven and closed the door.

By and by Little Audrey's mama came home. She looked everywhere for Little Audrey, but she couldn't find her. All of a sudden she smelled something burning. She opened the oven door, and there was Little Audrey, burned to a crisp. Her mother just laughed and laughed. She didn't know that Little Audrey could read.

The next day Little Audrey and her grandma were standing on their front porch watching the men pave their street. There was a cement mixer, a steam roller, and all kinds of things to watch. All of a sudden grandma saw a quarter out there right in the middle of the street. She dashed right out to get it, but just as she picked it up along came that old steam roller and rolled her out flatter than a sheet of theme paper. Little Audrey just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew all the time it was only a dime.

One day Little Audrey was playing with matches. Mama said, "Ummm, you better not do that." But Little Audrey was awful hard-headed; she kept right on playing with matches, and after a while she set the house on fire, and it burned right down to the ground. Mama and Little Audrey were looking at the ashes, and mama said, "Uh huh, I told you so! Now, young lady, just wait until your papa comes home. You certainly will catch it!" Little Audrey just laughed and laughed. She knew all the time that papa had come home an hour early and had gone to bed to take a nap.

The next night Little Audrey and her date were sitting on the sofa when all of a sudden the lights went out. "Oh," said Little Audrey's boy friend, "it sure is dark in here. I can't even see my hand in front of me." Little Audrey just laughed and laughed, 'cause she knew all the time that his hand wasn't in front of him.

## The Arkansas Traveler

A lost and bewildered Arkansas Traveler approaches the cabin of a Squatter, about forty years ago, in search of lodgings, and the following dialogue ensues:

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From *The Arkansas Traveler*, B. S. Alford, Photographer, Little Rock, Arkansas. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1876, by B. S. Alford, *Traveler.*—Halloo, stranger.

*Squatter.*—Hello yourself.

*T.*—Can I get to stay all night with you?

*S.*—No, sir, you can't git to—

*T.*—Have you any spirits here?

*S.*—Lots uv 'em; Sal seen one last night by that ar ole hollar gum, and it nearly skeered her to death.

*T.*—You mistake my meaning; have you any liquor?

*S.*—Had some yesterday, but ole Bose he got in and lapped all uv it out'n the pot.

*T.*—You don't understand; I don't mean pot liquor. I'm wet and cold and want some whisky. Have you got any?

*S.*—Oh, yes—I drunk the last this mornin.

*T.*—I'm hungry; haven't had a thing since morning; can't you give me something to eat?

*S.*—Hain't a durned thing in the house. Not a mouffull uv meat, nor a dust uv meal here.

*T.*—Well, can't you give my horse something?

*S.*—Got nothin' to feed him on.

*T.*—How far is it to the next house?

*S.*—Stranger! I don't know, I've never been thar.

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LITTLE ROCK, ARK., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

COL. SANDY FAULKNER, the original "Arkansaw Traveler," was born in Georgetown, Scott county, Kentucky, March 3, 1803. He came to Arkansas in 1829, and settled in Chicot county on the Mississippi river, as a cotton planter. In 1839, Col. Faulkner (with his father, the late Nicholas Faulkner, a Virginian by birth) took up his residence in Little Rock where he died August 4, 1874, at the age of seventy-one years.

It is well known throughout the Northwest that Col. Faulkner was the original personator of the "Arkansas Traveler"; it was his pride to be known as such. The story, it is said, was founded on a little incident which occurred in the campaign of 1840, when he made the tour of the state in company with the Hon. A. H. Sevier, Gov. Fulton, Chester Ashley and Gov. Yell. One day in the Boston mountains, the party approached a squatter for information of the route, and Col. "Sandy" was made spokesman of the company, and it was upon his witty responses the tune and story were founded. On return to Little Rock, a grand banquet was given in the famous "bar room" which used to stand near the Anthony house, and Col. "Sandy" was called upon to play the tune and tell the story. Afterward it grew into popularity. When he subsequently went to New Orleans, the fame of the "Arkansas Traveler" had gone ahead of him, and at a banquet, amid clinking glasses and brilliant toasts, he was handed a violin by the then governor of Louisiana, and requested to favor them with the favorite Arkansas tune. At the old St. Charles hotel a special room was devoted to his use, bearing in gilt letters over the door, Arkansas Traveler.—B. S. A.

*T.*—Well, do you know who lives here?

*S.*—Yes sir!

*T.*—As I'm so bold, then, what might your name be?

*S.*—It might be Dick, and it might be Tom; but it lacks right smart uv it.

*T.*—Sir! will you tell me where this road goes to?

*S.*—It's never gone any whar since I've lived here; it's always thar when I git up in the mornin'.

*T.*—Well, how far is it to where it forks?

*S.*—It don't fork at all; but it splits up like the devil.

*T.*—As I'm not likely to get to any other house to night, can't you let me sleep in yours; and I'll tie my horse to a tree, and do without anything to eat or drink?

*S.*—My house leaks. Thar's only one dry spot in it, and me and Sal sleeps on it. And that thar tree is the ole woman's persimmon; you can't tie to it, 'caze she don't want 'em shuk off. She 'lows to make beer out'n um.

*T.*—Why don't you finish covering your house and stop the leaks?

*S.*—It's been rainin' all day.

*T.*—Well, why don't you do it in dry weather?

*S.*—It don't leak then.

*T.*—As there seems to be nothing alive about your place but children, how do you do here anyhow?

*S.*—Putty well, I thank you, how do you do yourself?

*T.*—I mean what do you do for a living here?

*S.*—Keep tavern and sell whisky.

*T.*—Well, I told you I wanted some whisky.

*S.*—Stranger, I bought a bar'l more'n a week ago. You see, me and Sal went shars. After we got it here, we only had a bit betweenst us, and Sal she didn't want to use hern fust, nor me mine. You see I had a spiggin in one eend, and she in tother. So she takes a drink out'n my eend, and pays me the bit for it; then I'd take un out'n hern, and give her the bit. Well, we's getting long fust-rate, till Dick, durned skulking skunk, he born a hole on the bottom to suck at, and the next time I went to buy a drink, they wont none thar.

*T.*—I'm sorry your whisky's all gone; but, my friend, why don't you play the balance of that tune?

*S.*—It's got no balance to it.

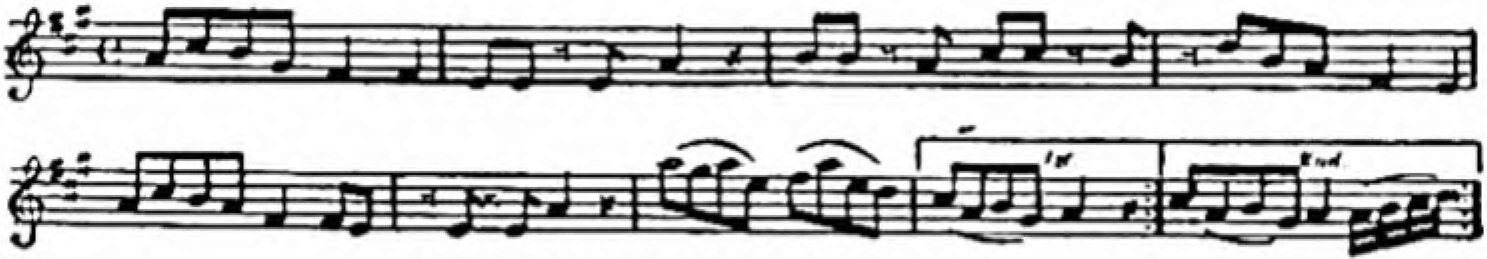
*T.*—I mean you don't play the whole of it.

*S.*—Stranger, can you play the fiddul?

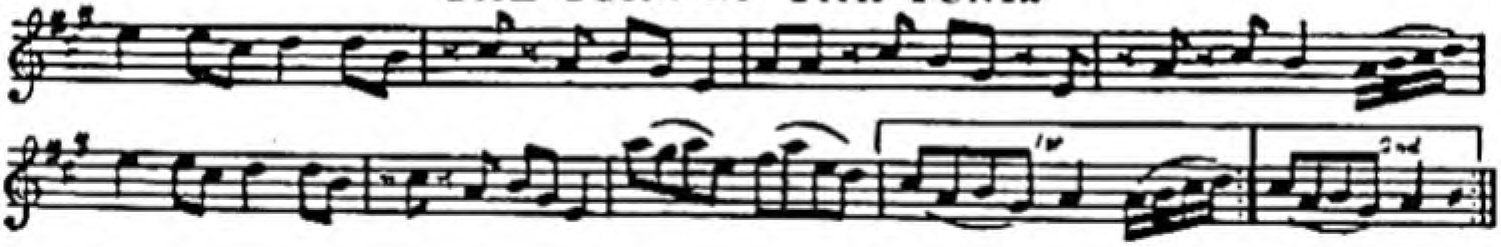
*T.*—Yes, a little, sometimes.

*S.*—You don't look like a fiddlur, but ef you think you can play any more onto that thar tune, you kin just try it.

(The traveler takes the fiddle and plays the whole of it.)



THE TURN OF THE TUNE.



*S.*—Stranger, tuck a half a duzen cheers and sot down. Sal, stir yourself round like a six-horse team in a mud hold. Go round in the hollar whar I killed that buck this mornin', cut off some of the best pieces, and fotch it and cook it for me and this gentleman, d'rectly. Raise up the board under the head of the bed, and get the ole black jug I hid from Dick, and gin us some whisky; I know thar's some left yit. Til, drive ole Bose out'n the bread-tray, then climb up in the loft, and git the rag that's got the sugar tied in it. Dick, carry the gentleman's hoss round under the shead, give him some fodder and corn; much as he kin eat.

*Til.*—Dad, they ain't knives enuff for to sot the table.

*S.*—Whar's big butch, little butch, ole case, cob-handle, granny's knife, and the one I handled yesterday! That's nuff to sot any gentleman's table, outer you've lost um. Durn me, stranger, ef you can't stay as long as you please, and I'll give you plenty to eat and to drink. Will you have coffey for supper?

*T.*—Yes, sir.

*S.*—I'll be hanged if you do, tho', we don't have nothin' that way here, but Grub Hyson,[1] and I reckon it's mighty good with sweetnin'. Play away, stranger, you kin sleep on the dry spot to-night.

*T.*—(After about two hours' fiddling.) My friend, can't you tell me about the road I'm to travel to-morrow?

*S.*—To-morrow! Stranger, you won't git out'n these diggins for six weeks. But when it gits so you kin start, you see that big sloo over thar? Well, you have to git crost that, then you take the road up the bank, and in about a mile you'll come to a two-acre-and-a-half corn-patch. The corn's mityly in the weeds, but you needn't mind that: jist ride on. About a mile and a half or two miles from thar, you'*ll* cum to the damdest swamp you ever struck in all your travels ; it's boggy enuff to mire a saddle-blanket. Thar's a fust rate road about six feet under thar.

*T.*—How am I to get at it?

*S.*—You can't git at it nary time, till the weather stiffens down sum. Well, about a mile beyant, you come to a place whar thar's two roads. You kin take the right hand ef you want to; you'll foller it a mile or so, and you'll find its run out; you'll then have to come back and try the left; when you git about two miles on that, you may know you're wrong, fur they ain't any road thar. You'll then think you're mity lucky ef you kin find the way back to my house, whar you kin cum and play on thata'r tune as long as you please.

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[1] Sassafras tea.

# II. The Sky's the Limit

*An authentic liar knows what he is lying about, knows that his listeners—unless they are tenderfeet, greenhorns—know also, and hence makes no pretense of fooling either himself or them. At his best he is as grave as a historian of the Roman Empire; yet what he is after is neither credulity nor the establishment of truth. He does not take himself too seriously, but he does regard himself as an artist and yearns for recognition of his art. He may lie with satiric intent; he may lie merely to make the time pass pleasantly; he may lie in order to take the wind out of some egotistic fellow of his own tribe or to take in some greener; again, without any purpose at all and directed only by his ebullient and companion-loving nature, he may "stretch the blanket" merely because, like the redoubtable Tom Ochiltree, he had "rather lie on credit than tell truth for cash." His generous nature revolts at the monotony of everyday facts and overflows with desire to make his company joyful.* —*J. Frank Dobie.*

## Introduction

### THE "RELUCTANT OR RUSTIC PHILOSOPHIC STYLE"

As the germ of many a yarn, the anecdote is a close relative of the long-winded, extravagant tale which, as Mark Twain says, strings "incongruities and absurdities together in a wandering and sometimes purposeless way," taxing the credulity and sometimes the patience of the auditor. Mark Twain's own "Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," as compared with the original mining camp anecdote, demonstrates perfectly the method discussed[1] and illustrated in his essay, "How to Tell a Story," whereby an expert yarn-spinner makes a short story long.

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[1] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 499-503.

Connoisseur and master of the yarn, Mark Twain saw the "rambling and disjointed humorous story" as a characteristically American development, or, to be exact, a type of story that was "created in America and has remained at home." In contrast to comic and witty stories that "must be brief and end with a point," in a "burst," the easy-going, hit-or-miss yarn just meanders and "bubbles gently along." And even when it "finishes with a nub, point, snapper, or whatever you like to call it," the teller "will divert attention from that nub by dropping it in a carefully casual and indifferent way, with the pretense that he does not know it is a nub."

It has been said that "It is no use for an Eastern man to try to tell a big story when there is a Western man about." In the wide open spaces the yarn-spinner found range and elbow room for yarning with the sky as his limit, according to his doctrine of "manifest destiny" of the imagination. Fabulous invention and exaggeration must have afforded the pioneer some relief from monotony and loneliness, some compensation for littleness in the midst of bigness and for privation and want in a land of plenty. On the frontier, the tall tale also fitted into the need of booming and boosting, or exaggerating the advantages of a place; the code of teaching the young and inexperienced the "great verities by generous untruths"; the pose of the ring-tailed roarer; the myth of the comic demigod.

Although generally identified, through writers like Mark Twain, with the frontier, the tall tale got its start in New England, where long winters made master yarn-spinners out of fishermen and sailors; where rumors and mass hallucinations concerning sea-serpents and other fearsome critters, local prodigies and remarkable providences, haunted the superstitious, myth-making imagination; where hunters bragged more than they bagged; and local patriots (like "Shepherd Tom" Hazard of Narragansett in the Jonny-

Cake Papers) boasted and argued about the respective merits of their local paradises and ambrosias.[1]

The Yankee also mastered the trick of the slow fuse and the poker face—a way of playing down exaggeration and baiting the listener which, like ironic understatement, helps to make a yarn more effective and more credible. The grave manner, the slurring of the point, the incongruous and apparently irrelevant remarks, and especially the "silent reflective pause" and "soliloquizing way" of Maine's own Artemus Ward—these were part of the Yankee's habit of speaking as if he were thinking aloud or talking to himself (in contrast to the anecdotist's precise and concise style of public speech) and his trick of slow timing. "He lights a slow fuse and with a poker face he watches that fuse burn to the setting off of a little bomb of the unexpected."[2]

Originally, these mannerisms were associated with the Yankee cracker-box philosopher's comic mask of reluctant, rustic eloquence and supposedly slow thinking behind the laconic drawl. But dry style and straight face have always been part of the stock-in-trade and the trademark of the yarn-spinner everywhere, along with the elaborate building up of circumstantial detail to divert attention from the improbability of the narrative. In a larger sense, too, the dead pan is a rural American trait, which, like "laughing it off," was bred by the peculiar pioneer combination of optimism and stoicism. In story-telling, the dead pan is especially effective when the story ends in a sell, as in the classic yarn of pursuit and ambush by Indians (a favorite of Jim Bridger's).

> This Babcock one night is telling about getting jumped by 50 hostile Sioux, a war party, that's giving him a close run. The bullets an' arrows are tearin' the dirt all around, when he hits

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[1] See "Stout Fellows and Hard Liars," *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, pp. 212-281; also "Singular Occurrences" and "Mysterious Creatures," *ibid.*, pp. 284-314.

[2] Charles Edward Crane, in *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, p. 105.

the mouth of a deep canyon. He thinks he's safe, but after ridin' up it a way, discovers it's a box gulch, with walls straight up from 600 to 1,000 feet. His only get-away's where he come in, an' the Indians are already whippin' their ponies into it.

Right here old Bab rares back in his chair, closes his eyes, an' starts fondlin' his whiskers. This seems to be the end of the story, when one of the listeners asks:

"What happened then?"

Old Bab, with his eyes still closed, takin' a fresh chew, whispered: "They killed me, b' God!"[1]

## A-SPEAKIN' ABOUT WIND

The original tall tale was probably a traveler's tale, told to impress the listener with the wonders of a place he (the listener) has never seen and must take the other's word for. Thus accounts of early travelers (including explorers and naturalists) are full of a specious kind of naive observation and report, on the borderline between nature lore and folklore, that is easily pushed into the realm of "unnatural natural history." In the case of "true" or quasi-true tall tales, dealing with singular experiences, freaks of weather, and hairbreadth escapes, there is "just enough truth in them to make good story material and to incite the imagination to try to improve on actual happenings."

Old-timers' reminiscences make good yarns because the mirages of time and memory do the necessary improving, playing just such tricks with facts as the optical illusions of light and distance on flat, shining plain or desert. Old-timers, moreover, have the right touch of garrulousness and a "too good memory," so often imitated by the tall tale teller. Because first-hand accounts by a supposed participant or eyewitness may contain as much truth (or clues to truth) as falsehood, tall tales are, typically, according to Walter Blair, "exuberant combinations of fact with outrageous fiction."

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[1] Charles M. Russell, in *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 505.

Such yarns, presented as "own stories" and to all intents and purposes based on the narrator's experience, have an authentic quality in their realistic background and detail. When, however, the delicate balance between truth and untruth is upset in favor of the latter, the artistic liar and the genuine whopper, big lie, or big windy are born. Then the narrator conveniently falls back on some mysterious informant, usually "long since dead" or lost track of, to whom he shifts the burden of proof. Or he may simply blame nature, which, like the wind in twister stories, becomes, by poetic personification, the mythical hero or villain of the piece. No longer expecting to be believed, the narrator becomes a poet, whose task is to heighten fact and deal frankly in illusions, creating a mood and an atmosphere favorable to the "willing suspension of disbelief that constitutes poetic faith."

Once the artistic liar is on his own, he may assume one of two roles. He may still play the part of the reporter, elaborating on rumors and erroneous perceptions credited to some one "not known directly" to him but "well-known to a close friend" (a handy device for nature-faking). Or, recognizing the fact that the liar and the boaster are essentially one and the same in their unconscionable exaggeration, he may simply boast of his own prowess and exploits. The result is Munchausen tales of tall shooting and big hunting, of marvelous guns and clever dogs (e.g., the bent gun that fires around a mountain, the shot-bag or powder horn hung on the corner of the crescent moon only to return the next day, the hunter who gets an unexpected ride in a peach-tree growing out of the deer he had wounded with a peach-stone, and the hunter who bags several bushels of wild pigeons' feet and legs when the flock rises off the ground a half second ahead of his shot).[1]

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[1] See *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 281, 585-588, 617-621.

## BOOSTERS AND KNOCKERS

In the "paradise of puffers" lying is also related to boosting, and in whoppers dealing with the assets or liabilities of climate, weather, and soil, the liars' club is next door to the boosters' club. Thus a Nueces (Texas) River Valley land company advertises a climate "so healthy that people rarely die except from accident or old age."[1] From this optimum environment it is only a step to fabulous California, where "it is so healthy we had to shoot a man in order to start a graveyard" or to still more fabulous Florida, where, according to Lowell Thomas, they had to kill a man twice before he would stay dead. It seems that the corpse of a gangster had been imported from Chicago so that a funeral could be staged by the local dealer in cemetery lots.

> The coffin was taken to the graveside and the lid was opened to give the bystanders a glimpse of the beautiful way the corpse had been laid out, a masterpiece of the undertaker's art. As the Florida sunshine hit the body, there was an immediate stir. The gangster arose with a yell, feeling for his gun. The bystanders had to kill him again before they could go on with the funeral.[2]

From the Rio Grande Valley comes a Texas variant involving state rivalry.

> That's no comparison with our Valley climate for health. One of our citizens went out to California, took sick and died there. They shipped his remains back to the Valley. The friends of the deceased were gathered around the corpse. When they opened the casket he raised up, greeted his friends and walked off.[3]

Other variations on the theme are found in the stories of a dying person being revived by the air expelled from a bicycle or automobile tire, which had been pumped up in California or Arizona, or of an incurable victim of tuberculosis being healed by a single ray of Florida sunshine.

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[1] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 288-289.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

In 1851 the Commissioner of Patents reported an "address delivered by A. Williams, Esq., at a meeting in San Francisco, for presenting the premium of a silver goblet, offered by Mr. C. A. Shelton for the best varieties of vegetables and grains." Among other prize products were an onion weighing 21 pounds, a turnip "which equalled exactly in size the top of a flour barrel," another weighing 100 pounds, a cabbage measuring 13 feet, six inches around, a beet weighing 63 pounds, and carrots three feet in length, weighing 40 pounds, not to mention a single potato, "larger than the size of an ordinary hat," of which twelve persons partook at a dinner in Stockton, "leaving at least the half untouched." Then the speaker added ironically:

> And we have some still larger and taller specimens of other things nearer home, here in our own city, to which many who hear me will bear witness from experience, and which come to maturity "monthly in advance"—rents, the tallest kind of rents, put up higher than the pines, and sometimes harder to get around than redwood![1]

To match the giant vegetables of history, folklore tells of a Florida pumpkin so large that when a farmer building a scaffold inside it to cut the meat out accidentally dropped his hammer and sent his son to look around for it, the latter met another man hunting a double mule team and a wagon that had got lost in there three weeks before.[2]

In Florida, as in many other states, the soil varies from fabulously rich to fabulously poor. On the one hand, ripe cucumbers hop into your pockets as you go along the rows dropping in cucumber seeds, and the corn springs up so fast and tall as you plant it that, when the narrator's brother sat on some stalks to keep them from making "all fodder and no roastin' ears," he dropped a note the next day, saying: "Passed through Heben yesterday at twelve o'clock sellin' roastin' ears to de angels."[1] On the other hand, some land is so poor that when a certain piece of ground had been given to the church to build on and the building was completed and the first meeting being held, they had to wire to Jacksonville for ten sacks of commercial fertilizer before they could raise a tune on that land.[2]

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[1] *Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1851*, Part II, Agriculture (1852), pp. 3-7.

[2] Zora Neale Hurston, in *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 600.

While in the East, especially the Southeast, "poor country" is generally exhausted or impoverished land, as a result of erosion and inefficient farming, the typical "poor country" of the West is "dry country." The dust storms of May, 1933, in the Dust Bowl created by overgrazing and plowing under of grassland (a man-made desert succeeding the "Great American Desert" of nineteenth-century geography books), started a revival of "dry country" jokes. But too little water and too much wind have always been the burden of folk jests and sayings in the semi-arid or sub-humid Great Plains, where it is said that "Between Amarillo and the North Pole there is nothing to stop the wind but a barbed wire fence."

Out there it gets "so dry sometimes that the cattle starve down and climb through the holes in the chicken wire and hide among the chickens" or "A drop of water hit a man and they had to throw two buckets of dirt in his face to bring him to." Here the usual method of keeping track of the wind is by hanging a log chain on a post: "If it stands out straight, that's a breeze, but when it gets to whipping around, and links snap off, look out; it's likely to be windy by sundown."[3]

In Oklahoma and Texas they tell, among other freaks of the wind, of seeing ground squirrels digging in fifteen feet in the air; of finding all the tools in a tool shed sharpened after a sand storm, their edges nicely ground down by the wind-driven sand which had worked its way through a hole in the wall, gradually enlarging the hole and wearing the wall away; of a man who saw his setting hens' nests and home brew go up together in a twister and was nearly turned in to the revenuers when the sheriff found some good egg nog all blown into and corked up in jugs over in the next county.[1]

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[1] The same, pp. 600-601.
[2] The same, p. 329.
[3] Russell Lord, *ibid.*, p. 332.

So pioneers grimly "laughed off" hardships on the Great Plains. "If you ain't burned up by drought and winds hot as hell or frozen out by blizzards and hail storms, you're eat up by grasshoppers, speculators, and politicians," some one has said. And also, he might have added, centipedes, snakes, bedbugs, fleas, and other pests that infested primitive shelters of pioneer settlers on the sodhouse frontier, as related in a song like "The Lane County Bachelor" (Starving to Death on My Government Claim).[2] Grasshopper plagues were commemorated in inscriptions on the wagons of emigrants returning empty-handed and disillusioned: "Hoppers et all but the wagonsheet," in the saying that the grass hoppers had eaten everything except the mortgage, and in the story of the grasshopper that ate the farmer's team of mules and then pitched the horseshoes with him for the wagon. In Nebraska one could stand by the side of a field and hear the grasshoppers threatening. "On the potato vines they would eat downward, and when they came to a potato bug would calmly kick it and go on their devastating way."[3]

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[1] B. A. Botkin, "Tall Talk and Tall Tales of the Southwest," *The New Mexico Candle*, New Mexico Normal University, Las Vegas, New Mexico, June 28, 1933. Also *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 512-520.

[2] See *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 314-316.

[3] *Pioneer Life in Nebraska*, Pamphlet One, *We Settled the Plains*, Series One, compiled by workers of the WPA Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Nebraska (Oct. 1941), p. 3.

## FEARSOME CRITTERS

Insect scourges and freakish animal behavior pass easily into stories of fanciful traits of animals and mythical monsters. Here belong the snake myths; e.g., the hoop or horn snake that lures its victim with its human whistle, then, seizing its tail in its mouth, rolls over and over like a hoop until it overtakes him and kills him with a thrust of the poison stinger at the end of its tail.[1] Perhaps the most famous of the "fearsome critters" is the gyascutus, godaphro, prock, sidehill dodger or gouger, side-swiper, mountain stem-winder, or gwinter—an animal with legs on one side of its body shorter than those on the other in order to enable it to keep its balance while feeding on the side of a steep mountain.

Apocryphal zoölogy involves many different tall tale types. Some fearsome critters are designed to scare greenhorns or tourists (e.g., the argopelter, which throws chunks of wood at passing lumbermen). Others have peculiar properties (e.g., the rubberado or bouncing porcupine, which gives resiliency to any one eating its flesh). Still others are horrible examples of creatures adapted to their environment (e.g., the snow snake, a deadly, pink-eyed, white-bodied serpent invisible to its prey) or hostile to it (e.g., the augerino, a malevolent subterranean denizen of Colorado in the shape of an enormous corkscrew worm, whose sole mission in life is to let water out of irrigation ditches).[2]

One of the earliest contributions to this playful lore of impossible creatures is to be found in Rev. Samuel Peters' *General History of Connecticut* (1781), with its descriptions of the whappernocker, the cuba, the dew-mink, and the humility.

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[1] *A Treasury of American Folklore,* pp. 583-584.

[2] For the augerino and the rubberado, see Ronald L. Ives, "Folklore from Eastern Middle Park, Colorado," *Journal of American Folklore,* Vol. 54 (January-June, 1941), Nos. 211-12, pp. 28-29.

> The humility is so called because it speaks the word humility, and seldom mounts high in the air. Its legs are long enough to enable it to outrun a dog for a little way; its wings long and narrow; body maigre and of the size of a blackbird's; plumage variegated with white, black, blue, and red. It lives on tadpoles, spawn, and worms; has an eye more piercing than the falcon, and the swiftness of an eagle; hence it can never be shot, for it sees the sparks of fire even before it enkindles the powder, and by the extreme rapidity of its flight gets out of reach in an instant. It is never known to light upon a tree, but is always seen upon the ground or wing. These birds appear in New England in summer only; what becomes of them afterwards is not discovered. They are caught in snares, but can never be tamed.[1]

Essentially, mythical monsters are hoaxing inventions, paralleled, in the mechanical world, by such contraptions as "The Rawhide Railroad" (an elaboration of the buckskin harness of Paul Bunyan[2]).

## RATHER LIE ON CREDIT THAN TELL TRUTH FOR CASH

As the tall tale tradition spread and grew, the natural competitiveness and rivalry of lying (as of boasting and boosting), inherent in its very comparatives and superlatives, gave rise to the lying contest, and the lying contest in turn to the Liars' Club. Almost every community has its traditional gathering place for local yarn-spinners (crossroads store, tavern, saloon, courthouse lawn, bunkhouse, barber shop, garage, filling station), symbolized by an actual or mythical "Liars' Bench" (akin to the "cracker barrel"). In the desperation born of a dearth of local copy, many a newspaper man has dreamed up the hoax of a Liars' Club, whose "meetings" or sessions are faithfully reported in the interest of truth. Thus Fred H. Hart, who became editor of the Austin, Nevada, *Reese River Reveille,* in 1873, created the Sazerac Lying Club, named for the saloon in which it met.[1] At least one of these newspaper hoaxes, the Burlington (Wisconsin) Liars' Club, became a reality, with an annual National Liars' Contest.

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[1] *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, pp. 301-302. For modern parallels, see the works of Will Cuppy; also Helen Ferril and Anne Folsom, *The Indoor Bird Watcher's Manual* (1950).

[2] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 209.

Unfortunately, the productions of these clubs and contests are not always up to the high standard set by the master yarn-spinners. The very idea of making a business of lying, which led inevitably from the "authentic" to the burlesque lie, is doomed to failure. In a "Lament for the Lost Art of Lying," Stewart H. Holbrook contends that the self-consciousness visited upon liars by folklorists (!) and liars' clubs was directly responsible for the "disappearance of the truly talented American liar."[2] When he holds up to scorn (beside acknowledged masterpieces like "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" and "The Rawhide Railroad") the "feeble and mirthless stuff" ground out by the lying mills, he is saying, in effect, that lying in, for, and by itself is not necessarily funny or artistic. It is only when the "artistic liar" combines the lie with grotesque fantasy, an ingenious and infectious story and characters, and style that his productions are worthy of being preserved. The best liars, moreover, try to achieve balance and contrast by relieving overstatement with understatement (or inverse exaggeration) and extravagance with realism. Therein lies the superiority of the yarn (extravagant tale) over the tall tale (incongruous medley of truth and falsehood) and of both over the whopper (pure lies).

—B. A. B.

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[1] *The Sazerac Lying Club* (1878).

[2] *New York Times Magazine*, February 5, 1950, pp. 18, 51-54.

## The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

In compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that *Leonidas W.* Smiley is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; and that he only conjectured that, if I asked old Wheeler about him, it would remind him of his infamous *Jim* Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me nearly to death with some infernal reminiscence of him as long and as tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was the design, it certainly succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the barroom stove of the old, dilapidated tavern in the ancient mining camp of Angel's, and I noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up, and gave me good-day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named *Leonidas W.* Smiley—*Rev. Leonidas W.* Smiley—a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of Angel's Camp. I added that, if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat me down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned the

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From *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches*, by Mark Twain, edited by John Paul, pp. 7-19. New York: C. H. Webb, Publisher. 1867.

initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in *finesse*. To me, the spectacle of a man drifting serenely along through such a queer yarn without ever smiling, was exquisitely absurd. As I said before, I asked him to tell me what he knew of Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, and he replied as follows. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once.

There was a feller here once by the name of *Jim* Smiley, in the winter of '49—or may be it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume wasn't finished when he first came to the camp; but any way, he was the curiousest man about always betting on anything that turned up you ever see, if he could get anybody to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't, he'd change sides. Any way that suited the other man would suit him—any way just so's he got a bet, *he* was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solit'ry thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take any side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush, or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting, he would be there reg'lar to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so he was too, and a good man. If he even seen a straddle-bug start to go anywheres, he would bet you how long it would take him to get wherever he was going to, and if you took him up, he would foller that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley, and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to *him*—he would bet on *any* thing—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he come in, and Smiley asked how she was, and he said she was considerable better—thank the Lord for his inf'nite mercy—and coming on so smart that with the blessing of Prov'dence she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says, "Well, I'll risk two-and-a-half she don't anyway."

Thish-yer Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because of course she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards' start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag-end of the race she'd get excited and desperate-like, and come cavorting and straddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side amongst the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust and raising m-o-r-e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and always fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.

And he had a little small bull-pup, that to look at him you'd think he wa'n't worth a cent but to set around and look ornery and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him he was a different dog; his under-jaw'd begin to stick out like the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover and shine savage like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him and bully-rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what *he* was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to it—not chaw, you understand, but only jest grip and hang on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off by a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he saw in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discouraged-like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was *his* fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't had no opportunities to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances if he hadn't had no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he calk'lated to edercate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he *did* learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summerset, or maybe a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of ketching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as far as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do 'most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog—and sing out, "Flies, Dan'l, flies!" and quicker'n you could wink he'd spring straight up and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor ag'in as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd 'been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywheres, all said he laid over any frog that ever *they* see.

Well, Smiley kept the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come across him with his box, and says:

"What might it be that you've got in the box?"

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like, "It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain't—it's only just a frog."

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, "H'm—so 'tis. Well, what's *he* good for?"

"Well," Smiley says, easy and careless, "he's good enough for *one* thing, I should judge—he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County."

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, "Well," he says, "I don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."

"Maybe you don't," Smiley says. "Maybe you understand frogs and maybe you don't understand 'em; maybe you've had experience, and maybe you ain't only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I've got *my* opinion and I'll risk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County."

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, "Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I ain't got no frog; but if I had a frog, I'd bet you."

And then Smiley says, "That's all right—that's all right—if you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog." And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

"Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his fore-paws just even with Dan'l's, and I'll give the word." Then he says, "One—two—three—jump!" and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it wa'n't no use—he couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as an anvil, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulders—this way—at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, "Well, *I* don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, "I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for—I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow." And he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and lifted him up, and says, "Why, blame my cats, if he don't weigh five pound!" and turned him upside down and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And—

[Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.] And turning to me as he moved away, he said: "Just set where you are, stranger and rest easy—I an't going to be gone a second."

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond *Jim* Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. *Leonidas W*. Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he button-holed me and re-commenced:

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only jest a short stump like a bannanner, and—"

"Oh! hang Smiley and his afflicted cow!" I muttered, good-naturedly, and bidding the old gentleman good-day, I departed.

## The Original Jumping Frog Story

A toad story.—A long stupid-looking fellow used to frequent a gambling saloon, some time since, and was in the habit of promenading up and down, but never speaking. The boys began to play with him, at last, and in down east drawl he gave them Rolands for their Olivers till they left him alone. At night he spread out his blankets on an empty monte table and lived like a gambler, except that he talked to no one nor gambled a cent. He became, at length, an acknowledged character, slunk in and out, and the boys tittered as they saw him pass. One day he came in with an important air, and said:

"I have got a toad that'll leap further than any toad you can scare up."

They soon surrounded him, and roared and laughed.

"Yes," says he, "I'll bet money on it. Barkeeper, give me a cigar box to hold my toad in."

The fun was great, and the oddity was the talk of all hands. A gambler, in the evening, happened to come across a big frog, fetched him to the gaming house and offered to jump him against the Yankee's toad.

"Well," says Yank, "I'll bet liquors on it." A chalk line was made and the toad put down. They struck the boards behind the toad and he leaped six feet, then the frog leaped seven. Yank paid the liquors; but, next morning, he says aloud:

"My toad waren't beat. No man's toad can leap with my toad. I have two ounces and two double eagles, and all of them I bet on my toad." The boys bet with him again, and his toad leaped six feet, but the frog leaped only two feet.

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From *The Origin of The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, by Oscar Lewis, pp. 31-32. Copyright, 1931, by The Book Club of California. San Francisco.

The earliest known printed version, from the Sonora *Herald* of June 11, 1853.

"The best two out of three," said the gambler.

"Very well," says Yank. But still the frog could not go over two feet. Yank pocketed the bets.

"My frog is darn heavy this morning," says the gambler.

"I reckoned it would be, stranger," says the Yankee, "for I rolled a pound of shot into him last night."

## The Rawhide Railroad

### FOREWORD

This is a story of a remarkable steam railroad actually constructed and successfully operated in the beautiful Walla Walla Valley many years ago, on which rawhide, overlaying wooden beams, was used in place of iron or steel rails. This unique road, later modernized, is now operated as part of a large railway. It is doubtful, however, if through the roll of years, the changing managements of the big line have preserved either record or recollection of the once famous rawhide railroad, which was the germ of the present transportation system.

More than a quarter century ago, while in railroad service, it was my good fortune to come in contact with an old Irish section foreman, long since dead, who had been actually employed on the singular railroad. The outlines of the narrative were extracted from him disjointedly and at different times, but the wealth of detail and circumstantial accuracy leaves no doubt of the truth of the story as a whole.

After the catastrophe, which closes the last chapter, the railroad was operated successfully for many years with iron plates fastened on top of the wooden rails.

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From *The Rawhide Railroad*, by George Estes, pp. 10, 38-42, 46-48, 49-54. Copyright, 1916, by George Estes. Canby, Oregon: Publishing House of the Clackamas County News.

## ONE THOUSAND PLUG HATS

The question of bringing the locomotives and equipment up the Columbia was one of great moment not unmixed with danger. The red robbers of Wish-ram, if they permitted the locomotives to pass around the rapids at all, would exact enormous tribute, or there would be a great battle which would gradually extend to the neighboring tribes and the result might be the complete annihilation of the whites, who in the whole Northwest were at that time greatly outnumbered by the Indians.

When the barges containing the two locomotives, one hundred pairs of car wheels and the thousand plug hats arrived at the rapids of Wish-ram the wisdom of Doc Baker shone out anew. The resplendent breeches of Seekolicks, though with luster now slightly impaired by coatings of salmon scales, still continued to attract the admiring glances of Wish-ram maidens, to the intense disgust of all the other bucks who from necessity were without breeches. This general feeling was, one might say, openly and nakedly displayed without attempt at concealment. Doc Baker had studied this situation from the first and now decided to profit by working with, instead of against, human passions and desires. He called a council of the head villains of Wish-ram and with the astuteness of an oriental peddler in the ancient city of Bagdad, displayed for the first time to the astonished gaze of the assembled robbers the wonders of a dress silk hat, and with consummate cunning bargained at the price of one stove-pipe for each of the doughty warriors of Wish-ram, not only for free passage of the locomotives, but for the combined power of a thousand naked but plug-hatted villains to drag the locomotives around the rapids.

What boots it now that Seekolicks' breeches displayed the glories of a sunset (apologies to the Pacific Monthly)? For influence with an Indian maiden a shiny plug hat will do more than a thousand dollars in stock of the Standard Oil Company, and Seekolicks' breeches fell behind in the mad race of changing fashions along the river.

At last the locomotives and one hundred pairs of car wheels reached Wallula, where Bill Green had built an incline running down to the water in order to bring them up to the roadway.

This he did without difficulty by hitching his great team of forty oxen to each locomotive in turn. It is safe to say that this team of oxen could pull as much as either locomotive, though not so rapidly, perhaps.

When the locomotives were at last on the main line the names "Loco Ladd" and "Loco Blue Mountain" were painted on their cab panels. Thus Doc Baker honored the two greatest objects, to him, in the world. The road was ready for service, the cars having been previously constructed entirely of wood and the car wheels brought from New York had been placed under them.

The chief engineer had conducted all these operations from the saddle of his mule. He galloped back from the leading yoke of the forty-ox team, to where Doc Baker stood near the locomotives, now on the main line, and solemnly announced to his chief that the road was ready for business. Then turning to the train dispatcher, also mounted on a long-legged mule with two big horse pistols hanging low on his hips, the chief engineer formally turned over the completed railroad from the Construction to the Operating Department in these terse terms: "They're your'n. Get to hell out o' here with 'em."

## COWCATCHERS

But the most intensely practical side of the train dispatcher was perhaps best illustrated in his conception of the locomotive pilots sometimes called "cowcatchers." When the locomotives first arrived at Wallula the train dispatcher, taking Pat Prunty, the source of all railroad wisdom, along with him, proceeded to look them over. He inquired of Prunty the purpose of the "V" shaped combination of slats on the front ends of the locomotives. Prunty explained that these were called "cowcatchers" and were to clear the track of cattle. The train dispatcher remarked that the bunch of corset staves might be serviceable for catching cows in the City of New York, but in the great West cows were harder to catch and more dangerous when caught. His authority in reality being as absolute as the country operator thinks the authority of the average dispatcher is today, he ordered the pilots ripped off the two locomotives and low platforms built in their stead. On each of these platforms he stationed one of his best hunting dogs which he quickly trained, when cattle on the tracks were approached, to leap to the ground and drive them away. The dogs at once grasped the responsibility of their important railroad positions and thirty minutes before departure of each train from their respective terminals at Walla Walla and Wallula, without the service of the caller, they took their positions on their locomotive platforms and, like the great figure heads on the ship prows of the conquering Vikings, they piloted the trains across the Walla Walla Valley faithful to their duties as "cowcatchers" in fact as well as in name.

The Rawhide Railroad, though operating in a cattle country, under the wise direction of Bill Green and Josh Moore paid fewer claims for cattle killed according to its size than any other railroad in the world.

Nor did the two "cowcatchers," "Ponto" and "Thor" ever "bark" on account of their overtime being short on payday. They were watchful of other things besides six o'clock and the pay car.

### DESTRUCTION OF THE RAILROAD

Soon it was found that the gnawing movements of the tread and flanges of the locomotive drivers quickly wore off the tops and edges of the wooden rails making it necessary constantly to renew them.

The pioneer of the Pacific coast has one favorite "metal" on which he relies to surmount all difficulties—the renowned rawhide. He who understands it can accomplish wonders with it. But its antics are strange to those from eastern lands, unfamiliar with its peculiar properties.

The pioneers delight to tell of the tenderfoot who did not know how rawhide would stretch when wet and contract when dry. He hitched up his team with rawhide harness in a rain storm, and attached a drag chain to a log, intending to pull it to his cabin for fuel. Driving the team to the cabin, he looked back and saw that the log had not moved, the rain causing the rawhide harness to stretch all the way to the house. Disgusted, he unharnessed the horses and threw the harness over a stump. The sun came out, and contracting the harness, pulled the log up to the house.

Possessed of enormous quantities of this durable material, Doc Baker directed that the wooden rails be "plated" with rawhide from Walla Walla to Wallula. It hardened in the summer sun and made the roadway practically indestructible.

In the rainy season the rawhide became soft and the road could not be operated, but there was no occasion to operate it in the winter time, for the reason that there was no traffic, and when the snow melted in the spring, the sun blazing out over the valley quickly put the rawhide railroad in good condition and ready for train service.

Finally there came a winter of terrible severity on the Pacific coast which was long spoken of as the "hard winter."

In the empire of Walla Walla it did untold damage. The snow fell very deep throughout the land. With the first rains and snows the rawhide railroad ceased operation for the winter, according to its usual custom, as the rawhide had become soft as mush.

Provisions became scarce. Great hardships and suffering were experienced. Cattle raisers were obliged to begin feeding their stock earlier than usual and soon the feed ran short. In desperation they turned the cattle out on the range, which was covered with deep snow. Blizzards swept over the prairie lands and many of the cattle froze to death standing erect, a gruesome sight.

The deer in the Blue Mountains were starved and frozen and the wolves from the fastnesses of the distant Rockies on the east and from icebound Canada on the north swept over the country, devouring the carcasses of the frozen deer and after these were all gone, forced on by famishing hunger, and growing bolder as the winter became more and more severe, they crept out over the great valley of Walla Walla in search of food.

Driven at last in desperation, to sustain their lives, the red-throated, ravening monsters, running in great packs, crowded on and on to the very edge of the village of Walla Walla, searching for carcasses of frozen cattle which they pawed out of the snow and quickly devoured.

The beleaguered village now felt that it was only a question of days, perhaps hours, if the storm did not break, when they would have to fight the oncoming horde of famished fiends to preserve their very lives. And everyone was prepared for the final conflict.

One night, late in midwinter, the blizzard was roaring and howling across the prairie and snow was falling in long slanting sheets, when a tremendous disturbance was made at the door of Doc Baker's home.

Grabbing up a loaded pistol, the doctor ran to the door, fearing the last stand against the wolves was at hand. Opening the door cautiously, he saw outside the two faithful Indians, Sapolil and Seekolicks, seeking admission. They hurled their shivering bodies through the doorway and began in a mixture of English and Chinook a wild effort to communicate some disastrous intelligence to their friend, Doc Baker.

Their excitement was so great that the only word the doctor could catch in the first rush of their attempt to talk was "wolves."

Without waiting for more, the doctor called to all the men of the household to arm themselves quickly and prepare for a fight against the coming onslaught of the wolves. Then turning to his sideboard he poured a good big drink of strong whiskey for each of the Indians, now trembling with cold and excitement. This disposed of, he pushed them down by the roaring fire-place and forced them to deliver their message slowly and in a manner that could be understood.

In broken English, interwoven with Chinook, Sapolil finally succeeded in disclosing the terrible information, which ran as follows:

"Railroad—him gonum hell. Damn wolves digum out—eatum all up—Wallula to Walla Walla."

## Slappy Hooper, World's Biggest, Fastest, and Bestest Sign Painter

Slappy Hooper wasn't big because he was six foot nine and wide between the eyes, no more than he weighed three hundred pounds without his cap on or his bucket in one hand and his brush in the other. It was just that there wasn't no job any too big for Slappy, and he never wanted a helper to mess around with.

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By Jack Conroy. From "Chicago Industrial Folklore." Manuscripts of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Illinois.

I have no idea how general the legend of Slappy Hooper is among sign painters, since I have not encountered so very many of these craftsmen. There were quite a number of the incidents telling the results of Slappy's realism on billboards, and I have chosen only two representative ones.

The attitude of the craftsman toward the helper is characteristic of most occupations.—J. C.

Even when he was painting a high stack, he didn't want any rube staggering and stumbling around the lines to his bosun's chair. He knew too well that lots of times a helper can be more trouble than he's worth. He'll yawn and gape around or send up the wrong color or the wrong brush, or he'll throw rocks at birds, or he'll make goo-goo eyes at dames passing by. Like as not, he'll foul the lines or pull the wrong one and send you butt over appetite to kingdom come.

At any rate, a helper keeps a man uneasy, and when a man's uneasy he ain't doing his best work. They ought to make it a penitentiary act for a helper "gapering, mopering, and attempting to gawk." Slappy said his life was too short to take a helper to raise up. He could let himself up and down as fast as a monkey could skin up a cocoanut tree or a cat lick its hind leg with its leg up and its tongue out. Anything Slappy wanted on the ground he could lasso with his special long and tough rawhide lariat and pull it up to where he was working.

Slappy done some big jobs in his day, and he done them right and fast. He says if there ever was a crime against nature it's this way they got here of late of blowing paint on with a spray gun like you was slaying cockroaches or bedbugs or pacifying a cow to keep the flies off her until she can get milked. Slappy liked to splash it on with a good old eight-inch brush, and he never was known to leave a brush lap or a hair on the surface when the job was finished. Slapping it on up and down or slapping it on crossways or anti-goggling[1] you couldn't tell the difference. It was all of a solid sheet.

With all these new inventions like smoke-writing from airplanes and painting signs from a pounce[2] (even pictures they do that way), it's hard to appreciate an old-timer like Slappy.

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[1] Slantwise, or crooked.—J. C.

[2] Perforated outline or stencil for painters unable to do freehand work efficiently. Derived from the bag of chalk, or pounce, used to pat the stencil onto the billboard or sign. Sometimes the outline is transferred by blowing powdered chalk against the pounce.—J. C.

He used to get jobs of lettering advertising on the sky, and it didn't fade away in a minute like smoke that pours out of a plane and gets torn to pieces by the wind before you can hardly spell out what it says. It was all pretty and fancy colors, too; any shade a man's heart could wish for, and it'd stay right there for days if the weather was fair. Of course, birds would fly through it, and when it'd rain the colors would all run together and when the clouds rolled by, there'd be what folks got to calling a rainbow. It really was nothing but Slappy Hooper's sky-writing all jumbled together. It seems that no man, woman, child or beast, alive or dead, was ever able to invent waterproof sky paint. If it could have been done, Slappy would have done it.

His biggest job was for the Union Pacific Railroad, and stretched from one end of the line to the other. The only way you could read it all was to get on a through train and look out of the window and up at the sky all the time. Everybody got stiff necks, of course, so Slappy had the bright idea of getting Sloan's Liniment to pay him for a big sign right at the end of the Union Pacific sign.

Nobody ever did understand how Slappy managed to do the sky painting. He'd have been a chump to tell anybody. He always used to say when people asked him: "That's for me to know and you to find out," or, "If I told you that, you'd know as much as I do."

The only thing people was sure of was that he used sky hooks to hold up the scaffold. He used a long scaffold instead of the bosun's chair he used when he was painting smokestacks or church steeples. When he started in to fasten his skyhooks, he'd rent a thousand acre field and rope it off with barbed wire charged with electricity. He never let a living soul inside, but you could hear booming sounds like war times and some folks figured he was firing his skyhooks out of a cannon and that they fastened on a cloud or some place too high for mortal eyes to see or mortal minds to know about. Anyways, after a while—if you took a spy glass—you could see Slappy's long scaffold raising up, up, up in the air and Slappy about as big as a spider squatting on it.

But that played out, somehow. It wasn't that people didn't like his skypainting any more, but the airplanes got to buzzing around as thick as flies around a molasses barrel and they was always fouling or cutting Slappy's lines, and he was always afraid one would run smack into him and dump over his scaffold and spill his paint if nothing worse. Besides, he said, if advertisers was dumb enough to let a pesky airplane take the place of an artist, the more he'd fool them, and it wasn't no skin off his behind. He could always wangle three squares a day and a pad at night by putting signs on windows for shopkeepers if he had to. If I can stay off public works,[1] I'll be satisfied, he thought to himself.

So Slappy said to hell with the *big* jobs. I'll just start painting smaller signs, but I'll make them so *real* and true to life that I can still be the fastest and bestest sign painter in the world, if I ain't the biggest any more. It's pure foolishness for a man to try to match himself against an airplane at making *big* signs.

He knew he could do it with one hand tied behind and both eyes punched out. Some sign painters couldn't dot the letter "i" without a pounce to go by. It was enough to make a dog laugh to see some poor scissorsbills wrastling around with a pounce, covered all over with chalk wet by sweat until they looked like a plaster of Paris statue.

Then, like as not, they'd get a pounce too small for the wall or billboard they was working on. When it was all on there was a lot of blank space left over. The boss'd yell: "Well, well, Bright Eyes! Guess the only thing to do is fetch a letter stretcher!" If the pounce happened to be too big, it was every bit as bad. "A fine job, Michael Angelo," the boss'd holler, "except you'll have to mix the paint with alum so's it'll shrink enough that we can squeeze it in with a crowbar."

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[1] It is the pride of many independent craftsmen and boomers that they have never been chained to a job on "public works," i.e., in a large factory where a time clock is punched and the routine is deadening. To the freelancing artisans, going on "public works" is a fate worse than death.—J. C.

One of Slappy's first jobs after he took to billboard painting was a picture of a loaf of bread for a bakery. It would make you hungry just to look at it. That was the trouble. The birds begin to flying on it to peck at it, and either they'd break their bills and starve to death because they didn't have anything left to peck with, or they'd just sit there perched on the top of the billboard trying to figure out what was the matter until they'd just keel over. Some of them'd break their necks when they dashed against the loaf, and others'd try to light on it and slip and break their necks on the ground. Either way, it was death on birds. The humane societies complained so much and so hard that Slappy had to paint the loaf out, and just leave the lettering.

He didn't like this a bit, though, because, as he often said, any monkey who can stand on his hind legs and hold anything in his fingers can make letters. The loaf of bread business sort of gave Slappy a black eye. People was afraid to hire him.

Finally the Jimdandy Hot Blast Stove and Range Company hired him to do a sign for their newest model, showing a fire going good inside, the jacket cherry red, and heat pouring off in every which direction. In some ways it was the best job Slappy ever done. The dandelions and weeds popped right out of the ground on the little plot between the billboard and the sidewalk, and in middle January of the coldest winter ever recorded by the Weather Bureau.

It was when the bums started making the place a hangout that the citizens and storekeepers of the neighborhood put in a kick. The hoboes drove a nail into the billboard so they could hang kettles and cans against the side of the heater and boiled their shave or boilup[1] water. They pestered everybody in the neighborhood for meat and vegetables to make mulligan stews. They found it more comfortable on the ground than in any flophouse in the city, so they slept there, too. They ganged up on the sidewalk so that you couldn't push through, even to deliver the United States mails. Mothers was afraid to send their little children to school or to the grocery store.

The company decided to hire a special watchman to shoo hoboes away, but this was a terrible expense. Not only that, but the watchman would get drowsy from the warmth, and no sooner did he let out a snore than the bums would come creeping back like old home week. Finally, the Company got the idea of having Slappy make the stove a lot hotter to drive the bums clean away.

So he did. He changed the stove from a cherry red to a white hot, and made the heat waves a lot thicker.

This drove the bums across the street, but it also blistered the paint off all the automobiles parked at the curb. Then one day the frame building across the way began to smoke and then to blaze. The insurance company told the Jimdandy Hot Blast Stove and Range Company to jerk that billboard down and be quick about it, or they'd go to law.

Slappy says now he feels like locking up his keister[2] and throwing away the key. They don't want big sign painting and they don't want true-to-life sign painting, and he has to do one or the other or both or nothing at all.

## Texas Razorbacks and Iowa Hogs

In every country where free range still exists the razor-

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[1] Boiling of clothing to kill body lice.—J. C.

[2] Satchel, resembling a rigid suitcase, in which itinerant sign painters keep their work materials and often their clothing as well.—J. C.

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From "Razorbacks," by H. B. Parks, *Southwestern Lore*, edited by J. Frank back is common, and tales relative to his behavior hold an important place in the lore of the folk. The collection of tales that follows comes from East Texas. While these tales exist in many forms and are very old, yet the East Texas versions have a certain individuality.[1]

The setting for the story-telling is a farmyard in a clearing in Houston County. Against the pines stands a story-and-a-half log house with a gallery in front. The house is almost a century old and shows its age. The proper number of discarded house and farm implements decorates the yard. The time is early winter, and twilight has brought the dwellers in from labor. The patriarch, Old Jim Baker, sits in a rocker on the gallery. In the yard some sons and grandsons are doing the chores.

* * * * *

"Huh! you boys ain't heard nothin' yet." Old man Baker came to life with a snap. He had pretended to be asleep while all this story-telling was going on. "Right after the War Between the States your Grandpa lived in Palestine and hauled freight from the landing down on the Trinity River to outside towns. He and Nick Busby was pardners in a livery stable and stage coach line. Pa did the freighting and Busby drove the coach and I was just a sizer boy and worked 'round, curried horses, fed, and was general help. Old Nick took a shine to me, and when he made the long trip to Jacksonville, he took me along for company.

"One day we carried an English woman who was going from St. Louis to Houston. Everywhere we stopped she'd say, 'Boots, go get me a drink of water,' and she never thanked me or anything. But when we got to the landing on the river, she told me to carry her things on board the

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Dobie. Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Number IX, 1931, pp. 16, 21-26. Copyright, 1931, by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Austin.

[1] For something of a historical treatment of the razorbacks and also for various additional folk yarns about the animal, read Chapter IV, "The Razorbacks," in *A Vaquero of the Brush Country*, by J. Frank Dobie, Dallas, Texas, 1929.—H. B. P.

*Leon*. That was the steamboat, and when I set them down in her room, she gave me an English coin.

"Now, at this time there were a lot of Yankee sharpers coming to Texas to buy cheap land. You see, the War took all the men and all the slaves and all the money, and there was nothing left to farm with and no one to farm. So land was cheap. One day we was a-waiting at Jacksonville for time to start with the coach, when Amos Whitecombe came up to Busby, and, leading him behind the coach, says, 'Nick, I've got a Yank who wants to buy river bottom land and I want you to talk river bottom land all the way from here to the Landing and call his attention to that land of mine that used to belong to the Bowdens. If he buys, you get 20 per cent. I can't go and need to make the sale.'

" 'Bring him on,' and Mr. Nick got up on the stage and looked very important. I, not knowing what to do, just stood there. Here come Whitecombe and a tall slim Yank who was introduced as Mr. Caldwell of Cincinnati. He got in and I put in the trunk and the carpet bag and away we went. The passenger was solemn as a preacher at a baptizing, but when we hit the Neches bottom he asked Nick to stop. He wanted to see the trees. We stopped, and then he was more social, and, say, he liked trees and plants and river bottoms.

"Nick said, 'You get up here in front so you can see. The boy will ride inside.'

" 'No, let the boy stay. No boy wants to be inside,' and he got back in and off we went again.

" 'Well,' says Nick. 'Neches is a nice river but it's nothing to the Trinity. Just wait till we see that and you'll see trees.'

"When we reached the hill that is over the Trinity bottom, Nick stopped and pointed over the bottom and says, 'There's Trinity bottom, fifteen miles wide and a hundred miles long. The finest hardwood forest in the world.'

"The Yank didn't say much. He just looked. As we got down the hill and started across the bottom, Mr. Nick pointed out the pecans, the gums, the oaks, and made talk a-plenty. The man didn't say much, just 'um hu' and 'unt o.' When we was about a mile out from the hill, he says all of a sudden, 'What are those muddy places on all those trees?'

"'Why,' says Nick, 'that's just where old man Brown's hogs been scratching the mud off their sides.'

"'Huh!' says the Yank. 'Some hogs! Those marks are at least three feet off the ground.'

"'Well,' says Nick, 'you haven't seen anything yet,' and went on a-talking about rich bottom land and what it would raise.

"In near the six-mile slough, all at once the Yank hollers out. 'What about those muddy streaks on those trees? They must be at least seven feet high.'

"'Why, sure they are,' replies Mr. Nick. 'This is Lon Benson's range, and he's got them improved Georgia porkers. On this fine range with all this rich mast of acorns, pecans, and crawdads, and such, 'tain't nothing uncommon to find hogs that high.' Nick went right on talking about what that land would be worth when it would be cleared and how the logs would pay for the clearing.

"By that time we'd hit the river road, and the stranger wasn't interested in the river. He kept looking at the trees. When we were at the East Bend, he says, 'Now, tell me what made those muddy streaks on those trees,' and he points to the line the last high water left, some thirteen feet or more up the trees.

"'Didn't I tell you, you hadn't saw nothing yet?' said Mr. Nick. 'Why, we're in Jake Long's range now, and he keeps the regular genuwine Texas razorbacks that can shake the acorns and pecans off the trees, can jump the river, and produce more bacon than any other kind of hogs. If you buy this land and put it into corn, you'll need that kind of hogs, because the ears will be so big no ordinary hog can handle 'em.'

"That settled it, and the Yank says, 'You tell Mr. Whitecombe to draw up the deeds and I'll be back in a week,' and he gave Mr. Nick a bunch of papers. 'This is the collateral.' I have always remembered that word.

"We got to the Landing and the *Leon* was there almost busting to get away. A mate was a-cussing a rouster and the captain was a-showing a lady aboard and then just as we were all ready to say goodby, that Yankee looked queer and said, 'Mr. Busby, you are quite a land salesman.'

"Mr. Nick was tickled and says, 'You do me proud, Mr. Caldwell. I can do a good job at almost anything.'

" 'Well,' says the Yankee, 'you did a good job of explaining about those mud marks on those trees. You see, I'm a sawmill man and I know high water marks when I see them, and this whole trip was made to see if there was sufficient water in the Trinity to raft lumber, and as for your razorbacks, you're certainly some liar.'

"With that he jumped on the boat, or I think Mr. Nick would have killed him, he was so mad."

* * * * *

Out in western Iowa the story of razorbacks with weights tied to their tails has a counterpart that cannot be omitted.

One afternoon in mid-summer a good many years ago a mechanic working in Council Bluffs for the McCormick Harvester Company set out to repair a binder for a farmer living up the Missouri River. He boarded a combination freight and passenger train, and it was not long before restlessness on account of slow progress drove him to the caboose. Here he entered into conversation with the conductor and was invited to ride in the cupola. As the train crept along he could see the rich bottom lands green with alfalfa and yellow with wheat. The mechanic was an observant fellow, and he noticed in many of the alfalfa fields circular bare spots, all of about the same size. He asked the conductor for an explanation, but the conductor could not explain. At last he reached his destination, and soon had the binder repaired.

Night was near; there was no train back until next morning; so the farmer was the host. After supper while the harvesters were sitting around waiting for bedtime and talking, the mechanic brought up again the observation that had aroused his curiosity.

"Mr. Bronson," he said, "while I was riding up here on the train, I noticed in many of the alfalfa fields circular bare spots, probably six to eight feet across. What are they? Can it be some disease?"

Someone gave a kind of a cross between a laugh and a cough. Mr. Bronson replied, "You are a stranger in this part of Iowa, I know from your remarks. We live where the Old Missouri has left us the blackest, richest soil in the world and also the stickiest.

"About those round bare spots in the alfalfa, this is how they happen to be. We raise hogs out here, the finest and best in the whole corn belt. Those alfalfa patches you noticed were hog pastures. Now, you see most of these have water holes for the hogs to wallow in. Well, Mr. Pig wallows in the mud and it sticks to him, and then he goes out to eat alfalfa. The mud commences to dry and that hurts; so he goes to a fence post and scratches off the mud till he is reasonably clean, but he can't scratch the mud off his tail; so a lump is left in the curlicue at the end. Well, that pig goes through this performance three or four times a day, and each time the lump on his tail gets larger and heavier. Finally comes a day when he tries to pull his tail load out and he can't. He gets scared and gives a mighty jump and pulls the lump out into the alfalfa until it sticks in the hay and then he is tied, tied by his own tail. He must eat, and so he eats round and round till the circle is cleaned as far as he can wiggle and twist.

"About this time the farmer misses the pig and knows just what to do. He takes a sledge hammer and goes down to the alfalfa patch and there is the pig anchored by the tail. He hits the ball of hard black soil; it shivers like glass and the pig makes tracks for the slop trough. Now, go back to Council Bluffs and tell the boys that one."

## The Squirrels and the Corn

Another story that he [the preacher in Garrard County] told was:

"I once had a hundred-acre river bottom farm as fine as a crow ever flew over. One year I raised an enormous crop of corn. After the corn had ripened, I noticed on the side adjoining the river that a large quantity had disappeared. So I concluded to watch and see who was stealing my corn. I concealed myself the following morning, early, in a small thicket that bordered the river. I had not been there long before I saw a number of objects start from the opposite bank. For a time I could not discern what they were, but as they came closer, I discovered they were squirrels—about a hundred of them—each seated on a shingle and propelling it with his tail. When they reached the bank they left their shingles in a little cove and went out in the field. Presently, each one returned with an ear of corn, and, mounting his shingle, propelled himself to the opposite side of the river. The next day, in company with a dozen expert wood-choppers, we cut down every hollow tree on the side where the squirrels landed, and found four hundred barrels of corn, besides killing many of the squirrels; indeed, we lived on squirrels for several weeks."

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From *Stories and Speeches of William O. Bradley*, with Biographical Sketch by M. H. Thatcher, pp. 132-133. Copyright, 1916, by Transylvania Printing Company. Lexington, Kentucky.

## A Pet Trout

. . . It is a likely story enough, as such things go, but there are points about it here and there which seem to require confirmation. I am told that it is a story well known and often repeated in Nova Scotia, but even that cannot be accepted as evidence of its entire truth. Being a fish-story it would seem to require something more. This is the tale as Charlie told it.

"Once there was a half-breed Indian," he said, "who had a pet trout named Tommy, which he kept in a barrel. But the trout got pretty big and had to have the water changed a good deal to keep him alive. The Indian was too lazy to do that, and he thought he would teach the trout to live out of water. So he did. He commenced by taking Tommy out of the barrel for a few minutes at a time, pretty often, and then he took him out oftener and kept him out longer, and by and by Tommy got so he could stay out a good while if he was in the wet grass. Then the Indian found he could leave him in the wet grass all night, and pretty soon that trout could live in the shade whether the grass was wet or not. By that time he had got pretty tame, too, and he used to follow the Indian around a good deal, and when the Indian would go out to dig worms for him, Tommy would go along and pick up the worms for himself. The Indian thought everything of that fish, and when Tommy got so he didn't need water at all, but could go anywhere—down the

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From *Angling in America*, by Charles Eliot Goodspeed, pp. 315-316. Copyright, 1939, by Charles E. Goodspeed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

. . . a story which may be familiar to many anglers as it is a favorite yarn of the guides. Albert Bigelow Paine, who prints it in *The Tent Dwellers*, credits it to his own guide, but in its dress, at least, the work of a more accomplished literary artist is indicated. . . . This pet-trout story has attained heights of fame loftier than those of printed page. Altered to meet the requirements of the screen it has been appropriated by Hollywood. In a recent movie season Wild Bill Hickok (impersonated by Gary Cooper), figuring in the film *The Plainsman*, reenacts the occurrence of this moving tale at the steamboat landing in St. Louis; the date, conjecturally, coinciding with the close of the Civil War.—C. E. G.

dusty road and stay all day out in the hot sun—you never saw the Indian without his trout. Show people wanted to buy Tommy, but the Indian said he wouldn't sell a fish like that for any money. You'd see him coming to town with Tommy following along in the road behind, just like a dog, only of course it traveled a good deal like a snake, and most as fast.

"Well, it was pretty sad the way that Indian lost his trout, and it was curious, too. He started for town one day with Tommy coming along behind, as usual. There was a bridge in the road and when the Indian came to it he saw there was a plank off, but he went on over it without thinking. By and by he looked around for Tommy and Tommy wasn't there. He went back a ways and called, but he couldn't see anything of his pet. Then he came to the bridge and saw the hole, and he thought right away that maybe his trout had got in there. So he went to the hole and looked down, and sure enough, there was Tommy, floating on the water, bottom-side up. He'd tumbled through that hole into the brook and drowned."

## Larkin Snow, the Miller, and His Fast-Running Dog

Fox-hunting was a favorite sport with many; indeed, all loved it, but only a few kept hounds and gave chase to mischievous Reynard. Foxes were quite plenty, and renowned for deeds of daring. The women hated hounds most cordially, yet they would endure them for the sake of their fowls. If their fowls were destroyed, they could neither make soup nor their rich pot-pies, both of which were much admired. Wylie Franklin was a great favorite

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From *Fisher's River (North Carolina) Scenes and Characters,* by "Skitt" [H. E. Taliaferro], pp. 149-151. New York: Harper & Bros. 1859.

For additional material on and by "Skitt," cf. *Carolina Humor,* Sketches by Harden E. Taliaferro . . . , Foreword by David K. Jackson (1938).

with chicken-raisers, for if a hen-roost was invaded a *hint* to him was all that was needed, and the marauder was soon taken. The compositions of Mozart, Handel, and Haydn were no music to these fox-hunters compared with the voice of hounds in the chase. Sometimes there would be a great rally of fox-hunters at some point to have a united chase, to see who had the fastest and the toughest hound. This must be kept in view in reading the story of Larkin's fast-running dog.

"You see," said Larkin, "a passel uv fellers cum frum 'bout Rockford, Jonesville, and the Holler to have a fox-hunt, and kep' a-boastin' uv thar fast dogs. I told 'um my little dog Flyin'-jib could beat all thar dogs, and give 'um two in the game. I called him up and showed him to 'um, and you mout a hearn 'um laugh a mile, measured with a 'coonskin and the tail throwed in. I told 'um they'd laugh t'other side o' thar mouths afore it were done. They hooted me.

"We went out with 'bout fifty hounds, and, as good luck would hev it, we started a rale old Virginny red fox, 'bout three hours afore day, on the west side uv Skull Camp Mount'in. He struck right off for the Saddle Mount'in, then whirled round over Scott's Knob, then to Cedar Ridge, up it, and over Fisher's Peak, round back uv the Blue Ridge, then crossed over and down it at Blaze Spur, then down to and over Round Peak, then down Ring's Creek to Shipp's Muster-ground, and on agin to'ads Skull Camp. Not fur from Shipp's Muster-ground they passed me, and Flyin'-jib were 'bout half a mile ahead on 'um all, goin' fast as the report of a rifle gun. Passin' through a meader whar thar were a mowin' scythe with the blade standin' up, Flyin'-jib run chug aginst it with sich force that it split him wide open frum the eend uv his nose to the tip uv his tail. Thar he lay, and nuver whimpered, tryin' to run right on. I streaked it to him, snatched up both sides uv him, slapped 'um together, but were in sich a hurry that I put two feet down and two up. But away he went arter the fox, scootin' jist in that fix. You see, when he got tired runnin' on two feet on one side, he'd whirl over, quick as lightnin', on t'other two, and it seemed ruther to hev increased his verlocity. He cotch the fox on the east side uv Skull Camp, a mile ahead uv the whole kit uv 'um.

"Now when the fellers cum up, and seen all thar dogs lyin' on the ground pantin' fur life, and Flyin'-jib jist gittin' his hand in, they was mighty low down in the mouth, I warrant you. All the conserlation they had was seein' my dog in sich a curious fix. But I jist kervorted, and told 'um that were the way fur a dog to run fast and long, fust one side up, then t'other—it rested him."

## Idaho Potatoes

In the Snake River Valley lives an old-timer who is known as Old Jim. Old Jim comes to town now and then and boasts of the fertility of his land, but complains that he is unable to market the stuff. He grew pumpkins, but they were so large he could not get them on to a wagon, and then ventured into potatoes. When, two years ago, a CCC camp was established nearby, Old Jim was approached by a man who wanted to buy a hundred pounds of spuds. "Only a hundred pounds?" he asked, scratching his pate. "No, I can't do it. I wouldn't cut a spud in two for no one."

## Running Broad Jump

In the old days, we didn't have no automobiles and paved roads and all sich fancy likes. We didn't even have no trails and bridges. One time I 'member my wife was sick and I had to go to Orofino for to bring a doctor. But when I got

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From *Idaho Lore*, prepared by the Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration, Vardis Fisher, State Director, American Guide Series, p. 139. Copyright, 1939, by George H. Curtis, Secretary of State for the State of Idaho. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd.

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*Ibid.*, p. 135.

to the river I couldn't figger out how to cross. I decided to jump but when I was about three-fourths across I seen I wouldn't make it so I come back to think some more. Then I had to put my mind to it. There was a big tree on the edge of the river, so I hooked my lasso on a limb and got back and run for it, using the lasso to give me a swing across. That was good thinkun, but not everybody woulda 'membered the lasso would bring him right back agin if he wasn't durned keerful. Me, I cut the lasso when I was half way across. I tell you, I don't know what some of them-there modern squirts woulda done in a case like that. Just set on the bank, I guess.

## Paul Bunyan Natural History

Inhabiting the big pine woods, the swamps, lakes and streams in the vicinity of Paul Bunyan's old-time logging camps were a considerable number of very wild animals. These differed considerably or greatly from the common bear, deer, wildcats and wolves of the timber lands. Most of them are now extinct or but rarely seen. Some were quite harmless, but most of them were of a very vicious or poisonous nature. Most were active only during the winter months, during the summer they hid in thickets or windfalls, hibernated in caves or hollow trees, or migrated to the North Pole. Tall tales of encounters with some of these mythical wild animals were often told in the lumber camp bunkhouses at night to create mirth or to impress and frighten the greenhorns. The information here collected concerning

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*Paul Bunyan Natural History*. Describing the Wild Animals, Birds, Reptiles and Fish of the Big Woods about Paul Bunyan's Old Time Logging Camps, Habitat and Habits of the Flitterick, Gumberoo, Hangdown, Hidebehind, Hodag, Luferlang, Rumptifusel, Sliver Cat, Shagamaw, Goofus Bird, Hoop Snake, Whirligig Fish and Others, by Charles Edward Brown. Madison, Wisconsin: C. E. Brown. 1935.

these Bunyan beasts, birds, reptiles and fish was obtained from various reliable, as well as unreliable and doubtful sources. The descriptions of these are arranged in alphabetical order for convenience of ready identification.

## ANIMALS

**AXEHANDLE HOUND.** Like a dachshund in general appearance, with a hatchet-shaped head, a short handle-shaped body and short, stumpy legs. It prowled about the lumber camps at night looking for axe or peavy handles, this being the only kind of food it was known to touch. Whole cords of axe handles were eaten by these troublesome wild hounds.

**ARGOPELTER.** This hoary beast lived in the hollow trunks of trees. From this point of vantage it dropped or threw chunks or splinters of wood on its victims. It but seldom missed its aim and a considerable number of lumberjacks were annually maimed by its gunnery. No complete description of it has ever been obtained and its life history is unknown.

**CAMP CHIPMUNK.** Originally small animals, they ate the tons of prune stones discarded from Paul Bunyan's camp cook shanty and grew so big and fierce that they killed all of the bears and catamounts in the neighborhood. Later Paul and his men shot them for tigers.

**FLITTERICKS.** The variety of flying squirrels which frequented the vicinity of the lumber camps were very dangerous because of the great rapidity of their flight. It was impossible to dodge them. One struck an ox between the eyes with such force as to kill the animal.

**GUMBEROO.** It lived in burned-over forests and was therefore easily avoided. It was very ferocious. It was "larger than a bear and had a round, leathery body that nothing could pierce. Bullets bounded off its tough hide. Often they struck the hunter on the rebound and killed him. The only thing that could kill a gumberoo was fire. Often at night the lumberjacks were awakened by loud explosions. These were caused by gumberoos blowing up in flames." A foolhardy photographer once took a picture of one but this also finally blew up.

GYASCUTUS. Also called the Stone-eating Gyascutus. This sordid beast has been described as "about the size of a white-tailed deer. Has ears like a rabbit and teeth like a mountain lion. It has telescopic legs which enables it to easily graze on hills. It has a long tail which it wraps around rocks when its legs fail to telescope together. It feeds on rocks and lichens, the rocks enabling it to digest the tough and leathery lichens. It is never seen except after a case of snake-bite."

HANGDOWN. Its Latin name is unknown. This utterly foolish animal lives in big woods "where it hangs down from the limbs of trees, either with its fore or hind paws, either head down or head on, either way making no difference to its digestion. It climbs along the bottom of a limb after the manner of a sloth. Its skin brings a high price. It is more easily hunted at night when a tub must be placed over it. It is then killed with an axe."

HIDEBEHIND. A very dangerous animal which undoubtedly accounted for many missing lumberjacks. It was always hiding behind something, generally a tree trunk. Whichever way a man turned it was always behind him. From this position it sprang upon its human prey, dragged or carried the body to its lair and there feasted on it in solid comfort. Because of its elusive habits no satisfactory description of it has ever been obtained.

HODAG. The Black Hodag (Bovinus spiritualis) was discovered by E. S. "Gene" Shepard, a former well-known timber cruiser of Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Its haunts were in the dense swamps of that region. According to its discoverer, this fearful beast fed on mud turtles, water snakes and muskrats, but it did not disdain human flesh. Mr. Shepard found a cave where one of these hodags lived. With the aid of a few lumberjacks he blocked the entrance with large rocks. Through a small hole left in the barricade he inserted a long pole on the end of which he fastened a sponge soaked in chloroform. The hodag, thus rendered unconscious, was then securely tied and taken to Rhinelander, where a stout cage had been prepared for it. It was exhibited at the Oneida County fair. An admission fee was charged and a quite large sum of money earned. Later Mr. Shepard captured a female hodag with her thirteen eggs. All of these hatched. He taught the young hodags a series of tricks, hoping to exhibit the animals for profit.

This ferocious beast had horns on its head, large bulging eyes, terrible horns and claws. A line of large sharp spikes ran down the ridge of its back and long tail. Colored photographs of it can be obtained at Rhinelander. The hodag never lay down. It slept leaning against the trunks of trees. It could only be captured by cutting deeply into the trunks of its favorite trees. It was a rare animal of limited distribution.

LUFERLANG. A curious animal with a dark blue stripe running down the length of its back. Its brushy tail was in the middle of the back. Its legs were triple-jointed and it could run equally fast in any direction. It attacked its prey without provocation and its bite was certain death. "It bites but once a year, so if one met one that had already bitten someone, one was perfectly safe."

ROPERITE. A very active animal as large as a pony. It had a rope-like beak with which it roped the swiftest rabbits. Sometimes it got a tenderfoot logger. It generally traveled in small herds. Probably now extinct.

RUMPTIFUSEL. A very ferocious animal of large size and great strength. When at rest it wraps its thin body about the trunk of a tree, a clever stratagem for securing its prey.

A lumberjack mistakes it for a fur robe, approaches it and is thereafter missing.

SIDEHILL DODGER. It lived on the sides of hills only. It had two short legs on the up-hill side. It burrowed in hillsides, having a number of such burrows and was always dodging in and out of these. It was harmless but its very strange antics frightened many a lumberjack into fits.

SLIVER CAT. This fierce denizen of the pineries was a huge cat with tasseled ears. Its fiery red eyes were in vertical instead of horizontal eye slits. It had a very long tail with a ball-shaped knob at its end. The lower side of this knob was bare and hard, on its upper side were sharp spikes. The big cat would sit on a limb waiting for a victim. When one passed beneath it would knock him down with the hard side and then pick him up with the spikes. Paul Bunyan's crews suffered continual losses from the depredations of these big cats.

TEAKETTLER. A small animal which obtains its name from the noise which it made, resembling that of a boiling teakettle. Clouds of vapor issued from its nostrils. It walked backward from choice. But few woodsmen have ever seen one.

TOTE-ROAD SHAGAMAW. An animal enigma. Its hind legs have the hoofs of a moose and its fore legs the claws of a bear, making it very hard to track. When it tires of using one set of legs it travels on the other set. It prowls along the tote roads devouring any coats or other articles of lumberjacks' clothing which it finds hung on trees or logs. It is fierce in appearance but is shy and harmless.

TRIPODERO. It had tripod legs. "Its beak is like the muzzle of a gun with a sight on the end. Going through the brush it raises and lowers itself to look for game. Upon seeing a bird or small animal it tilts itself to the rear, sights along its beak and lets fly a pellet of clay. A quantity of squids of this material it carries in its cheeks. It never misses a shot." This is more particularly an animal of the vicinity of the civil engineering and railroad construction than of the logging camps.

## BIRDS

GOOFUS BIRD. One of the peculiar birds nesting near Paul Bunyan's old time camp on the Big Onion River. It was the opposite of most other birds—it always flew backwards instead of forwards. This curious habit an old lumberjack explained: "It doesn't give a darn where it's going, it only wants to know where it's been." It also built its nest upside down.

GILLYGALOO. This hillside plover nested on the slopes of Bunyan's famous Pyramid Forty. Living in such a locality it laid square eggs so that they could not roll down the steep incline. The lumberjacks hardboiled these eggs and used them as dice.

PINNACLE GROUSE. This bird had only one wing. This enabled it to fly in only one direction about the top of a conical hill. The color of its plumage changed with the seasons and with the condition of the observer.

PHILLYLOO BIRD. It had a long beak like a stork and long legs. It had no feathers to spare. It flew upside down the better to keep warm and to avoid rheumatism in its long limbs. It laid Grade D eggs.

MOSKITTOS. The naturalist in Paul Bunyan's camp classified these as birds. When Paul was logging in the Chippewa River region the mosquitos were particularly troublesome. They were so big that they could straddle the stream and pick the passing lumberjacks off the log drive. Sometimes a logging crew would find one in this position, quickly tie his legs to convenient trees and use him for a bridge across the river. Paul imported from Texas a drove of fighting bumblebees to combat the mosquitos. They fought for a while, then made peace and intermarried. The result of this crossing made the situation worse than ever before for the loggers. The offspring had stingers at both ends.

## SNAKES

HOOP SNAKE. A very poisonous reptile. It could put its tail in its mouth and roll with lightning-like rapidity after its prey. The only way to avoid it was to quickly jump through its hoop as it approached. This so confused the large serpent that it rolled by and could not get back. Its sting was in its tail. A hoop snake once stung a peavy handle. This swelled to such great size that Paul Bunyan cut one thousand cords of wood out of it.

SNOW SNAKE. These reptiles came over from Siberia by frozen Bering Strait during the very cold year of the two winters. Being pure white in color they were always more plentiful during the winter time. They were very poisonous and savage. Tanglefoot oil was the only remedy for their bite.

## FISH

COUGAR FISH. This savage fish, armed with sharp claws, lived in the Big Onion River. It was the cause of the disappearance and death of many river drivers, whom it clawed off the logs and beneath the water. Paul Bunyan offered a big reward for their capture and extermination, but the fish heard of it and stayed away. None were taken.

GIDDY FISH. They were small and very elastic, like India rubber. They were caught through holes in the ice during the winter. The method pursued was to hit one on the head with a paddle. This fish would bounce up and down. Taking the cue from him the other fish would bounce also. Presently all would bounce themselves out of the water onto the ice. There they were easily gathered up.

GOOFANG. This curious fish always swam backward instead of forward. This was to keep the water out of its eyes. It was described as "about the size of a sunfish, only larger."

LOG GAR. These big fish had a snout so well armed with large saw teeth that they could saw right through a log to get at a juicy lumberjack. Once in the water they made mince meat of him.

UPLAND TROUT. These very adroit fish built their nests in trees and were very difficult to take. They flew well but never entered the water. They were fine pan fish. Tenderfeet were sent out into the woods to catch them.

WHIRLIGIG FISH. Related to the Giddy Fish. They always swam in circles. They were taken in the winter months through holes in the ice, like their relatives. The loggers smeared the edges of the holes with ham or bacon rind. Smelling this the fish would swim around the rims of the holes, faster and faster, until they whirled themselves out on the ice. Thousands were thus taken.

### BUGS

Chiefly bedbugs and greybacks. The men soon got used to them and tolerated them. Wood ticks were in the brush but were out of date and inactive in the winter time.

## Fearsome Critters

### THE CACTUS CAT

*(Cactifelinus inebrius)*

How many people have heard of the cactus cat? Thousands of people spend their winters in the great Southwest

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From *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods, With a Few Desert and Moun-*

—the land of desert and mountain, of fruitful valleys, of flat-topped mesas, of Pueblos, Navajos, and Apaches, of sunshine, and the ruins of ancient Cliff-dwellers. It is doubtful, however, if one in a hundred of these people ever heard of a cactus cat, to say nothing of seeing one sporting about among the cholla and palo verde. Only the old-timers know of the beast and its queer habits.

The cactus cat, as its name signifies, lives in the great cactus districts, and is particularly abundant between Prescott and Tucson. It has been reported, also, from the valley of the lower Yaqui, in Old Mexico, and the cholla-covered hills of Yucatan. The cactus cat has thorny hair, the thorns being especially long and rigid on its ears. Its tail is branched and upon the forearms above its front feet are sharp, knife-like blades of bone. With these blades it slashes the base of giant cactus trees, causing the sap to exude. This is done systematically, many trees being slashed in the course of several nights as the cat makes a big circuit. By the time it is back to the place of beginning the sap of the first cactus has fermented into a kind of mescal, sweet and very intoxicating. This is greedily lapped up by the thirsty beast, which soon becomes fiddling drunk, and goes waltzing off in the moonlight, rasping its bony forearms across each other and screaming with delight.

## THE SQUONK

### (*Lacrimacorpus dissolvens*)

The range of the squonk is very limited. Few people outside of Pennsylvania have ever heard of the quaint beast, which is said to be fairly common in the hemlock forests of that State. The squonk is of a very retiring disposition, generally traveling about at twilight and dusk. Because of its

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*tain Beasts*, by William T. Cox, pp. 27, 31, 37, 43. Copyright, 1911, by William T. Cox. Washington, D. C.: Press of Judd & Detweiler, Inc., 1910.

misfitting skin, which is covered with warts and moles, it is always unhappy; in fact it is said, by people who are best able to judge, to be the most morbid of beasts. Hunters who are good at tracking are able to follow a squonk by its tear-stained trail, for the animal weeps constantly. When cornered and escape seems impossible, or when surprised and frightened, it may even dissolve itself in tears. Squonk hunters are most successful on frosty moonlight nights, when tears are shed slowly and the animal dislikes moving about; it may then be heard weeping under the boughs of dark hemlock trees. Mr. J. P. Wentling, formerly of Pennsylvania, but now at St. Anthony Park, Minnesota, had a disappointing experience with a squonk near Mont Alto. He made a clever capture by mimicking the squonk and inducing it to hop into a sack, in which he was carrying it home, when suddenly the burden lightened and the weeping ceased. Wentling unslung the sack and looked in. There was nothing but tears and bubbles.

## THE SPLINTER CAT

*(Felynx arbordiffisus)*

A widely distributed and frightfully destructive animal is the splinter cat. It is found from the Great Lakes to the Gulf, and eastward to the Atlantic Ocean, but in the Rocky Mountains has been reported from only a few localities. Apparently the splinter cat inhabits that part of the country in which wild bees and raccoons abound. These are its natural food, and the animal puts in every dark and stormy night shattering trees in search of coons or honey. It doesn't use any judgment in selecting coon trees or bee trees, but just smashes one tree after another until a hollow one containing food is found. The method used by this animal in its destructive work is simple but effective. It climbs one tree, and from the uppermost branches bounds down and across toward the tree it wishes to destroy. Striking squarely with its hard face, the splinter cat passes right on, leaving the tree broken and shattered as though struck by lightning or snapped off by the wind. Appalling destruction has been wrought by this animal in the Gulf States, where its work in the shape of a wrecked forest is often ascribed to windstorms.

## THE BILLDAD

*(Saltipiscator falcorostratus)*

If you have ever paddled around Boundary Pond, in northwest Maine, at night you have probably heard from out the black depths of a cove a spat like a paddle striking the water. It may have been a paddle, but the chances are ten to one that it was a billdad fishing. This animal occurs only on this one pond, in Hurricane Township. It is about the size of a beaver, but has long, kangaroo-like hind legs, short front legs, webbed feet, and a heavy, hawk-like bill. Its mode of fishing is to crouch on a grassy point overlooking the water, and when a trout rises for a bug, to leap with amazing swiftness just past the fish, bringing its heavy, flat tail down with a resounding smack over him. This stuns the fish, which is immediately picked up and eaten by the billdad. It has been reported that sixty yards is an average jump for an adult male.

Up to three years ago the opinion was current among lumberjacks that the billdad was fine eating, but since the beasts are exceedingly shy and hard to catch no one was able to remember having tasted the meat. That fall one was killed on Boundary Pond and brought into the Great Northern Paper Company's camp on Hurricane Lake, where the cook made a most savory slumgullion of it. The first (and only) man to taste it was Bill Murphy, a tote-road swamper from Ambegegis. After the first mouthful his body stiffened, his eyes glazed, and his hands clutched the table edge. With a wild yell he rushed out of the cook-house, down to the lake, and leaped clear out fifty yards, coming down in a sitting posture—exactly like a billdad catching a fish. Of course, he sank like a stone. Since then not a lumberjack in Maine will touch billdad meat, not even with a pike pole.

# *Part Three*

# Chimney Corner Tales

*"Wal, I know lots o' strange things," said Sam, looking mysteriously into the fire. "Why, I know things, that ef I should tell—why, people might say they wa'n't so; but then they* is *so for all that. . . . Why, I should scare ye to death, mebbe," said Sam doubtingly.*

*—Harriet Beecher Stowe*

## I
## Animal and Nursery Tales

## II
## Ghost, Witch, and Devil Tales

# I. Animal and Nursery Tales

*Animals talk to each other, of course. There can be no question about that; but I suppose there are very few people who can understand them.* —*Mark Twain*

*I step on a tin, de tinnin ben',*
*Dat's de way my story en'.* —*Negro folk tale closing formula*

## Introduction

### THE BIRDS AND THE BEASTS WERE THERE

"The rabbits have somehow gotten the body of the hare and the ears of the ass; the frogs, the body of the toad, the horns of the stag-beetle, and the tail of the lizard; the trees fall up-hill, and the lightning comes out of the ground." This fabulous place is not fairyland but Texas as described by a writer on "South-western Slang." "In such a country," he continues, "it is not to be wondered at that their sesquipedalian adjectives get somewhat twisted in coming up out of the hard, waxy prairies."[1]

Beginning with such freaks of nature and surpassing them with the freaks of myth and fable, American storytellers have constructed a world on or beyond the borderline between fact and fantasy, which reflects the Western dream or nightmare of paradise or hell on earth and at the same time closely resembles fairyland and wonderland. This is the place where not only all men are strong and clever and the vegetables grow to giant proportions, but the half-horse, half-alligator man, the centaur-like "gentleman on horseback," the demon with the blazing six-shooter, and the comic demigod vie with one another and struggle with fearsome critters.

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[1] Socrates Hyacinth, "South-Western Slang," *The Overland Monthly*, Vol. [illegible] (August, 1869), p. 125. See also "Hell in Texas," *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 334-335.

Thus the human imagination has always brooded on and toyed with the idea of men like gods, animals like men, and demons and monsters like neither. The antiquity and universality of tales of animal gods and ancestors, animal taboos and totems, beast men, werewolves, helpful, grateful, and magic animals, men who have the power to understand the language of birds and beasts, children who have grown up with and like animals, animals that talk, think, and act like human beings—all this points to a stage in human thought in which man made little distinction between himself and the rest of creation. In this interrelationship of souls, shapes, and personal qualities man learned to transfer human attributes (wisdom, speech) to animals and to appropriate to himself and even worship their peculiar traits (as in totemic names of clans and lodges).

Hence animal comparisons (strong as an ox, sly as a fox, hungry as a bear, stubborn as a mule, crazy as a bedbug) and proverbs, fables, jests, and allusions involving animal characters (belling the cat, the lion's share, big frog in a little puddle; "What a dust I have raised," quoth the fly upon the coach; "Neat but not gaudy," said the monkey as he painted his tail blue). Above all, folktale-tellers have enjoyed speculating on the origin of physical characteristics of animals (why the fox's mouth is sharp, why the possum has no hair on his tail, and why the rabbit has a short tail and a white spot on his forehead[1]), without drawing any particular moral therefrom. Finally, imagining a time when animals lived in communities, the tellers have derived entertainment and instruction from beast epics in which talking animals satirize human folly and wisdom or simply engage in comic contests of deception between fools and tricksters, or other fantastic adventures, much as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny and all the other modern animal heroes still do in the funnies, comic books, and animated cartoons.

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[1] *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*, p. 509.

In American Negro animal tales of the Uncle Remus type Brer Rabbit (*Compère Lapin* among the Louisiana French) is true to his folktale character as the good-natured, likable, happy-go-lucky rogue, mischief-maker, and trickster (a role filled elsewhere by various animals—fox, tortoise, chevrotain, spider, coyote). In telling these tales the Negro was simply perpetuating his folk heritage, being permitted and encouraged to do so in the capacity of story-teller to the children of his white masters. At the same time he may have seen in Brer Rabbit a parallel for his plight under slavery, where cunning and deception were often his only weapons of defense or offense.

Just as Negro humor is part of the humor of all oppressed peoples, so the symbolism of Brer Rabbit is part of the universal tendency of the weak and downtrodden everywhere to identify themselves with diminutive, nimble, and clever animals and thus find compensation "in the victory of the weak over the strong and in the triumph of brains over brute strength." It is a tribute to the personality of Brer Rabbit, the native skill and humor of the original story-tellers, and the folk artistry of Joel Chandler Harris that the Brer Rabbit stories (rather, say, than the animal tales of the American Indian) have established themselves as classics and favorites of children.

## BOTTOM RAIL ON TOP

Animal stories of the Brer Rabbit type involve a contest between two animals, one of which wins by deception. Brer Rabbit's traditional feud with Brer Fox combines the interest of the comic contest of wits, already seen in the feud between the Yankee peddler and the backwoodsman, and of the cruel practical joking of the frontier. "Creeturs is natchally got ha'sh idees," says Uncle Remus to the little boy, "en you may take notice: wharsomever you see ha'r en bristles, right dar you er mo' dan ap' ter fin' claws en tushes."[1]

Like the fairy tale hero, Brer Rabbit also wins sympathy, as he wins success, through overcoming a series of obstacles and conquering an adversary by wit and cunning rather than force. In addition to his own cleverness and good fortune, however, the fairy tale hero has the assistance of magic objects and helpers. Herein the fairy tale success-story pattern differs from that of the Horatio Alger and "log cabin to White House" type, where, according to the American ethics of success, the poor boy makes good through hard work, thrift, honesty, and perseverance. The comics, with their glorification of courage and cunning in overcoming obstacles and adversaries, mark a return to the fairy tale pattern, even to the use of magic and transformations, as in Superman and Captain Marvel, Jr.

In English folk tales of the hero tale type, the favorite trickster is a boy named Jack, the human counterpart of Brer Rabbit. Although chiefly concerned with giant-killing, he is also engaged in outwitting his duller brothers and in winning the princess. The suspense and humor of the contest between the quick-witted Jack and his slow-witted adversaries are heightened by Jack's occasional droll gullibility or short-sightedness and happy-go-lucky stumbling upon good fortune or bad. In America the bold, confident Jack has undergone considerable adaptation and localization, with the result that in the Southern mountains he is, as befits the favorite hero of the mountain people, a light-hearted, good-natured, unaffected chap of the kind that is always getting into and out of scrapes and takes things in his stride, with backwoods chivalry and democracy—a hero in spite himself and the bottom rail on top.[1]

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[1] Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus and His Friends* (1892), p. 69.

Besides the hero tale, nursery tales include human interest and problem stories, domestic comedies and tragedies. Here belong droll tales like "The Twist-Mouth Family," "Borrowing Trouble," and "The Three Fools," in which easy things are made hard through disability, imagining troubles, or short-sightedness, and wonder tales like "The Talking Eggs" and "The Singing Bones." With these fairy tales of good and evil, in which rewards and punishments are meted out by eggs that say "Take me" or "Don't take me" and the bones of murdered children expose their mother's unnatural crime, we exchange the world of pluck and luck for that of mystery and terror.

—B. A. B.

## The Tar Baby (Water-Well Version)

Once upon a time there was a water famine, and the runs went dry and the creeks went dry and the rivers went dry, and there wasn't any water to be found anywhere, so all the animals in the forest met together to see what could be done about it. The lion and the bear and the wolf and the fox and the giraffe and the monkey and elephant, and even the rabbit—everybody who lived in the forest was there, and they all tried to think of some plan by which they could get

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[1] Cf. Richard Chase, *The Jack Tales* (1943), pp. ix, xii.

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From *Negro Tales from West Virginia*, by John Harrington Cox, *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. XLVII (October-December, 1934), No. CLXXXVI, pp. 344-347.

"The Rabbit That Wouldn't Help Dig A' Well." Contributed by Miss Dora Lee Newman to a book, *Marion County in the Making*, Fairmont, Marion County, West Virginia, 1918. Privately printed. Learned from her father, who in turn, learned it when a child from "our Old Sukey and black Canada. . . .—J. H. C.

water. At last they decided to dig a well, and everybody said he would help—all except the rabbit, who always was a lazy little bugger, and he said he wouldn't dig. So the animals all said, "Very well, Mr. Rabbit, if you won't help dig this well, you shan't have one drop of water to drink." But the rabbit just laughed and said, as smart as you please, "Never mind, you dig the well and I'll get a drink all right."

Now the animals all worked very hard, all except the rabbit, and soon they had the well so deep that they struck water and they all got a drink and went away to their homes in the forest. But the very next morning what should they find but the rabbit's footprints in the mud at the mouth of the well, and they knew he had come in the night and stolen some water. So they all began to think how they could keep that lazy little rabbit from getting a drink, and they all talked and talked and talked, and after a while they decided that someone must watch the well, but no one seemed to want to stay up to do it. Finally, the bear said, "I'll watch the well the first night. You just go to bed, and I'll show old Mr. Rabbit that he won't get any water while I'm around."

So all the animals went away and left him, and the bear sat down by the well. By and by the rabbit came out of the thicket on the hillside and there he saw the old bear guarding the well. At first he didn't know what to do. Then he sat down and began to sing:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

Presently the old bear lifted up his head and looked around. "Where's all that pretty music coming from?" he said. The rabbit kept on singing:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

This time the bear got up on his hind feet. The rabbit kept on singing:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

Then the bear began to dance, and after a while he danced so far away that the rabbit wasn't afraid of him any longer, and so he climbed down into the well and got a drink and ran away into the thicket.

Now when the animals came the next morning and found the rabbit's footprints in the mud, they made all kinds of fun of old Mr. Bear. They said, "Mr. Bear, you are a fine person to watch a well. Why, even Mr. Rabbit can outwit you." But the bear said, "The rabbit had nothing to do with it. I was sitting here wide-awake, when suddenly the most beautiful music came right down out of the sky. At least I think it came down out of the sky, for when I went to look for it, I could not find it, and it must have been while I was gone that Mr. Rabbit stole the water." "Anyway," said the other animals, "we can't trust you any more. Mr. Monkey, you had better watch the well tonight, and mind you, you'd better be pretty careful or old Mr. Rabbit will fool you." "I'd like to see him do it," said the monkey. "Just let him try." So the animals set the monkey to watch the well.

Presently it grew dark, and all the stars came out; and then the rabbit slipped out of the thicket and peeped over in the direction of the well. There he saw the monkey. Then he sat down on the hillside and began to sing:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

Then the monkey peered down into the well. "It isn't the water," said he. The rabbit kept on singing:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

This time the monkey looked into the sky. "It isn't the stars," said he. The rabbit kept on singing.

This time the monkey looked toward the forest. "It must be the leaves," said he. "Anyway, it's too good music to let go to waste." So he began to dance, and after a while he danced so far away that the rabbit wasn't afraid, so he climbed down into the well and got a drink and ran off into the thicket.

Well, the next morning, when all the animals came down and found the footprints again, you should have heard them talk to that monkey. They said, "Mr. Monkey, you are no better than Mr. Bear; neither of you is of any account. You can't catch a rabbit." And the monkey said, "It wasn't old Mr. Rabbit's fault at all that I left the well. He had nothing to do with it. All at once the most beautiful music that you ever heard came out of the woods, and I went to see who was making it." But the animals only laughed at him. Then they tried to get someone else to watch the well that night. No one would do it. So they thought and thought and thought about what to do next. Finally the fox spoke up. "I'll tell you what let's do," said he. "Let's make a tar man and set him to watch the well." "Let's do," said all the other animals together. So they worked the whole day long building a tar man and set him to watch the well.

That night the rabbit crept out of the thicket, and there he saw the tar man. So he sat down on the hillside and began to sing:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

But the man never heard. The rabbit kept on singing:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

But the tar man never heard a word. The rabbit came a little closer:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

The tar man never spoke. The rabbit came a little closer yet:

"Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?
Cha ra ra, will you, will you, can you?"

The tar man never spoke a word.

The rabbit came up close to the tar man. "Look here," he said, "you get out of my way and let me down into that well." The tar man never moved. "If you don't get out of my way, I'll hit you with my fist," said the rabbit. The tar man never moved a finger. Then the rabbit raised his fist and struck the tar man as hard as he could, and his right fist stuck tight in the tar. "Now you let go of my fist or I'll hit you with my other fist," said the rabbit. The tar man never budged. Then the rabbit struck him with his left fist, and his left fist stuck tight in the tar. "Now you let go of my fists or I'll kick you with my foot," said the rabbit. The tar man never budged an inch. Then the rabbit kicked him with his right foot, and his right foot stuck tight in the tar. "Now you let go of my foot or I'll kick you with my other foot," said the rabbit. The tar man never stirred. Then the rabbit kicked him with his left foot, and his left foot stuck tight in the tar. "Now you let me go or I'll butt you with my head," said the rabbit. And he butted him with his head, and there he was; and there the other animals found him the next morning.

Well, you should have heard those animals laugh. "Oh, ho, Mr. Rabbit," they said. "Now we'll see whether you steal any more of our water or not. We're going to lay you across a log and cut your head off." "Oh, please do," said the rabbit. "I've always wanted to have my head cut off. I'd rather die that way than any other way I know." "Then we won't do it," said the other animals. "We are not going to kill you any way you like. We are going to shoot you."

"That's better," said the rabbit. "If I had just stopped to think, I'd have asked you to do that in the first place. Please shoot me." "No, we'll not shoot you," said the other animals; and then they had to think and think for a long time.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said the bear. "We'll put you into a cupboard and let you eat and eat and eat until you are as fat as butter, and then we'll throw you up into the air and let you come down and burst." "Oh, please don't!" said the rabbit. "I never wanted to die that way. Just do anything else, but please don't burst me." "Then that's exactly what we'll do," said all the other animals together.

So they put the rabbit into the cupboard and they fed him pie and cake and sugar, everything that was good; and by and by he got just as fat as butter. And then they took him out on the hillside and the lion took a paw, and the fox took a paw, and the bear took a paw, and the monkey took a paw; and then they swung him back and forth, and back and forth, saying: "One for the money, two for the show, three to make ready, and four to go." And up they tossed him into the air, and he came down and lit on his feet and said:

"Yip, my name's Molly Cotton-tail;
Catch me if you can."

And off he ran into the thicket.

## Share Crops

Br'er Bear en Br'er Rabbit dey wuz farmers. Br'er Bear he has acres en acres uf good bottom land, en Br'er Rabbit has des' er small sandy-land farm. Br'er Bear wuz allus er

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From "Brazos Bottom Philosophy," by A. W. Eddins, *Southwestern Lore*, Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Number IX, 1931, edited by J. Frank Dobie, pp. 153-156. Copyright, 1931, by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Dallas: The Southwest Press.

"raisin' Cain" wid his neighbors, but Br'er Rabbit was er most engenerally raisin' chillun.

Arter while Br'er Rabbit's boys 'gun to git grown, en Br'er Rabbit 'lows he's gwine to have to git more land if he makes buckle en tongue meet.

So he goes ober to Br'er Bear's house, he did, en he say, sez he, "Mo'nin', Br'er Bear. I craves ter rent yer bottom field nex' ye'r."

Br'er Bear he hum en he haw, en den he sez, "I don't spec I kin 'commodate yer, Br'er Rabbit, but I moughten consider hit, bein's hit is you."

"How does you rent yer land, Br'er Bear?"

"I kin onliest rent by der sheers."

"What is yer sheer, Br'er Bear?"

"Well," said Br'er Bear, "I takes der top of de crop fer my sheer, en you takes de rest fer yo' sheer."

Br'er Rabbit thinks erbout it rale hard, en he sez, "All right, Br'er Bear, I took it; we goes ter plowin' ober dare nex' week."

Den Br'er Bear goes back in der house des' er-laughin'. He sho is tickled ez to how he hez done put one by ole Br'er Rabbit dat time.

Well, 'long in May Br'er Rabbit done sont his oldest son to tell Br'er Bear to come down to de field to see erbout dat are sheer crop. Br'er Bear he comes er-pacin' down to de field en Br'er Rabbit wuz er-leanin' on de fence.

"Mo'nin', Br'er Bear. See what er fine crop we hez got. You is to hab de tops fer yer sheer. Whare is you gwine to put 'em? I wants ter git 'em off so I kin dig my 'taters."

Br'er Bear wuz sho hot. But he done made dat trade wid Br'er Rabbit, en he had to stick to hit. So he went off all huffed up, en didn't even tell Br'er Rabbit what to do wid de vines. But Br'er Rabbit perceeded to dig his 'taters.

'Long in de fall Br'er Rabbit 'lows he's gwine to see Br'er Bear ergin en try to rent der bottom field. So he goes down to Br'er Bear's house en after passin' de time of day en other pleasant sociabilities, he sez, sez he, "Br'er Bear, how erbout rentin' der bottom field nex' year? Is yer gwine ter rent hit to me ergin?"

Br'er Bear say, he did, "You cheat me out uf my eyes las' year, Br'er Rabbit. I don't think I kin let yer hab it dis ye'r."

Den Br'er Rabbit scratch his head er long time, en he say, "Oh, now, Br'er Bear, you know I ain't cheated yer. Yer just cheat yerself. Yer made de trade yerself en I done tuck yer at yer word. Yer sed yer wanted der tops fer yer sheer, en I gib um ter you, didn't I? Now you des' think hit all ober ergin en see if you can't make er new deal fer yerself."

Den Br'er Bear said, "Well, I rents to you only on dese perditions: dat yer hab all de tops fer yer sheer en I hab all de rest fer my sheer."

Br'er Rabbit he twis' en he turn en he sez, "All right, Br'er Bear, I'se got ter hab more land fer my boys, I'll tuck hit. We go to plowin' in dare right away."

Den Br'er Bear he amble back into de house. He wuz shore he'd made er good trade dat time.

Way 'long in nex' June Br'er Rabbit done sont his boy down to Br'er Bear's house ergin, to tell him to come down ter de field ter see erbout his rent. When he got dare, Br'er Rabbit say, he did:

"Mo'nin', Br'er Bear. See what er fine crop we hez got? I specks hit will make forty bushels to der acre. I'se gwine ter put my oats on der market. What duz yer want me ter do wid yer straw?"

Br'er Bear sho wuz mad, but hit wa'n't no use. He done saw whar Br'er Rabbit had 'im. So he lies low en 'lows to hisself how he's gwine to git eben wid Br'er Rabbit yit. So he smile en say, "Oh, der crop is all right, Br'er Rabbit. Jes' stack my straw enywheres eround dare. Dat's all right."

Den Br'er Bear smile en he say, "What erbout nex' year, Br'er Rabbit? Is you cravin' ter rent dis field ergin?"

"I ain't er doin' nothin' else but wantin' ter rent hit, Br'er Bear," said Br'er Rabbit.

"All right, all right, you kin rent her ergin. But dis time I'se gwine ter hab der tops fer my sheer, en I'se gwine ter hab de bottoms fer my sheer too."

Br'er Rabbit wuz stumped. He didn't know what ter do nex'. But he finally managed to ask, "Br'er Bear, ef yer gits der tops en der bottoms fer yer sheer, what will I git fer my sheer?"

Den old Br'er Bear laff en say, "Well, you would git de middles."

Br'er Rabbit he worry en he fret, he plead en he argy, but hit does no good.

Br'er Bear sez, "Take hit er leave hit," en jes' stands pat.

Br'er Rabbit took hit.

Way 'long nex' summer ole Br'er Bear 'cided he would go down to der bottom field en see erbout dat dare sheer crop he had wid Br'er Rabbit. While he wuz er-passin' through de woods on his way, he sez to himself, he did:

"De fust year I rents to de ole Rabbit, I makes de tops my sheer, en ole Rabbit planted 'taters; so I gits nothin' but vines. Den I rents ergin, en der Rabbit is to hab de tops, en I de bottoms, en ole Rabbit plants oats; so I gits nothin' but straw. But I sho is got dat ole Rabbit dis time. I gits both de tops en de bottoms, en de ole Rabbit gits only de middles. I'se bound ter git 'im dis time."

Jes den de old Bear come ter de field. He stopped. He look at hit. He shet up his fist. He cuss en he say, "Dat derned little scoundrel! He done went en planted dat fiel' in corn."

## Old Sis Goose

Ole sis goose wus er sailin' on de lake, and ole brer fox wus hid in de weeds. By um by ole sis goose swum up close to der bank and ole brer fox lept out and cotched her.

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From "Brazos Bottom Philosophy," by A. W. Eddins, *Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society*, No. II, 1923, edited by J. Frank Dobie, pp. 50-51. Copyright, 1923, by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Austin.

"O yes, ole sis goose, I'se get yer now, you'se been er sailin' on mer lake er long time, en I'se got yer now. I'se gwine to break yer neck en pick yer bones."

"Hole on der', brer fox, hole on, I'se got jes as much right to swim in der lake as you has ter lie in der weeds. Hit's des as much my lake as hit is yours, and we is gwine to take dis matter to der cotehouse and see if you has any right to break my neck and pick my bones."

And so dey went to cote, and when dey got dere, de sheriff, he wus er fox, en de judge, he wus er fox, and der tourneys, dey wus foxes, en all de jurrymen, dey was foxes, too.

And dey tried ole sis goose, en dey 'victed her and dey 'scuted her, and dey picked her bones.

Now my chilluns, listen to me, when all de folks in de cotehouse is foxes, and you is jes er common goose, der ain't gwine to be much jestice for you pore nigger.

## Compair Lapin and Mr. Turkey

Every evening when Compair Lapin returned from his work he passed through a yard where there was a large turkey sleeping on its perch, and like all other turkeys that one also had its head under its wing to sleep.

Every evening Compair Lapin stopped to look at the turkey, and he asked himself what it had done with its head. Finally, one evening, he was so curious that he stopped underneath the perch, and said: "Good evening, Mr. Turkey."

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From *Louisiana Folk-Tales*, in French Dialect and English Translation, collected and edited by Alcée Fortier, Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, Volume II, p. 25. Copyright, 1895, by the American Folk-Lore Society. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

In this story Compair Lapin is not as cunning as usual, and we can hardly believe that he acted as foolishly as Compair Bouki would have done. The tale is genuine Negro folklore, as is evidenced by the exact knowledge of the habit of turkeys sleeping on their perches.

Informant, Julia, 7 Prytania Street, New Orleans.—A. F.

"Good evening," said the turkey, without raising its head.

"Do you have a head, Mr. Turkey?"

"Yes, I have a head."

"Where is it?"

"My head is here."

Compair Lapin looked in vain, but he could not see Mr. Turkey's head. As he saw that the turkey did not want to talk to him or show him where was its head, he went to his house and said to his sister: "Do you know that to go to sleep turkeys take off their heads? Well, I believe I shall do the same thing, because it is less trouble to sleep without a head, and one can speak without a head, for the turkey spoke to me."

Before his sister had the time to tell him anything, he took an axe and cut off his head. His sister tried in every way possible to stick it on again, but could not do so, as her brother had killed himself.

## Compair Bouki and the Monkeys

Compair Bouki put fire under his kettle, and when the water was very hot he began to beat his drum and to cry out:

Sam-bombel! Sam-bombel tam!
Sam-bombel! Sam-bombel dam!

The monkeys heard and said: "What? Bouki has something good to eat, let us go," and they ran up to Bouki and sang: "Molési cherguinet, chourvan! Chéguillé, chourvan!" Compair Bouki then said to the monkeys: "I shall enter into the kettle, and when I say 'I am cooked,' you must take me

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*Ibid.*, pp. 25, 27.

The monkey, in our Louisiana stories is often a dupe. He is, however, more cunning than Bouki, whose stratagems always fail in the end. Here we have words supposed to indicate the language of the monkeys, and of Bouki, and it is interesting to see a Negro imitate an animal in his stories. In Ouolof *Bouki* means the hyena, and is always a dupe. . . . Informant, an old Negro at *la Vacherie*, St. James Parish.—A. F.

out." He jumped into the kettle, and the monkeys pulled him out as soon as he said "I am cooked."

The monkeys, in their turn, jumped into the kettle, and cried out, immediately on touching the water, "We are cooked." Bouki, however, took his big blanket, and covering the kettle, said: "If you were cooked you could not say so." One little monkey alone escaped, and Bouki ate all the others. Some time after this Compair Bouki was hungry again, and he called the monkeys:

Sam-bombel! Sam-bombel tam!
Sam-bombel! Sam-bombel dam!

When the monkeys came, he jumped into the kettle again and said: "I am cooked, I am cooked." The monkeys, however, which had been warned by the little monkey which had escaped the first time, did not pull Bouki out, but said: "If you were cooked you could not say so."

## Jack and the Fox

One time they was an old man and three sons, Jack, Will and Tom. He called 'em up and divided his fortune. Give 'em all their portion and started 'em out to see who could marry the richest. Jack says to his father, "I don't want but one thing you've got, that's the old pet fox." Will and Tom got theyselves all dressed up fine and started out. They didn't want Jack to foller 'em, he looked like such a slab, so they made him go by hisself. So he tramped all day long. Finally along about dark he looked up the hill and saw a farm house and he thought he'd better go there and try to git lodgin' fer the night. Didn't have a penny, jest old pet

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From "Mountain White Folk-Lore: Tales from the Southern Blue Ridge," by Isabel Gordon Carter, *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 38 (June-September, 1925), No. 149, p. 349.

According to the informant, Mrs. Jane Gentry, of Hot Springs, North Carolina: "Old Jack, Will and Tom Tales they are called. They're the oldest stories that ever been in existence, I reckon. Old Grandpop alluz told us—we'd hire him to tell us. Law, he could tell 'em!" (*Ibid.*, p. 340.)

fox. He went on up to the house, and out in the yard he said, "Hello!" And here come the prettiest little cat walkin' to the door. "Who keeps house here?" says Jack. She says, "Cat and a mouse. I use to be a woman but the witches got mad at me and witched me into a cat, but," she says, "if you'll stay here three days and nights and not let a thing come into this house, not the least thing even down to a mouse, I'll be a pretty girl and I'll marry you." So he squeezed the old fox and it said, "Gold enough." "Yes, bedads, I will," says Jack.

So he put his old fox down and he cut him some clubs and fixed hisself at the door. Everything from an elephant to an ant tried to come in on him that night—all kinds of varmints. Next morning he went to the cat about hit and there's the prettiest baby he ever saw. So he got breakfast. The varmints weren't bad to try to come in of a day—always at night. And that night he got him some lamps and candles and he jest killed snakes and rats and other varmints all night long. Next mornin' he saw jest the prettiest little girl he ever did see. And he squeezed the fox and hit says, "Gold enough." So he fit all that night and she was a pretty woman and they uz married. So they hitched up the horses and carriage and started out fer his father's so as Jack cud show him his wife.

When they got near, they heard the banjo and the fiddle and music and all, and Will and Tom and their wives was there. So Jack jest pulled out on a turnpike and left his wife and put on his old clothes and tuk his pet fox under his arm and went in. So Will he pushed his wife behind one door, Tom, he pushed his behind the beds so they wouldn't see Jack he was so shabby. So Jack come on in and he squeezed his fox and hit says, "Gold enough." And then Jack, he went and got his wife and carriage and all and drove up. And Tom tuk his wife out one door and Will tuk his out the other—'cause they weren't rich. So Jack he come out the right end of the horn. He married plumb rich.

## The Twist-Mouth Family

There was once a father and a mother and several children, and all but one of them had their mouths twisted out of shape. The one whose mouth was not twisted was a son named John.

When John got to be a young man he was sent to college, and on the day he came home for his first vacation the family sat up late in the evening to hear him tell of all he had learned. But finally they prepared to go to bed, and the mother said, "Father, will you blow out the light?"

"Yes, I will," was his reply.

"Well, I wish you would," said she.

"Well, I will," he said.

So he blew, but his mouth was twisted, and he blew this way (the narrator shows how he did it—blowing upward), and he couldn't blow out the light.

Then he said, "Mother, will you blow out the light?"

"Yes, I will," was her reply.

"Well, I wish you would," said he.

"Well, I will," she said.

So she blew, but her mouth was twisted, and she blew this way (blowing downward) and she couldn't blow out the light.

Then she spoke to her daughter and said, "Mary, will you blow out the light?"

"Yes, I will," was Mary's reply.

"Well, I wish you would," said her mother.

"Well, I will," Mary said.

So Mary blew, but her mouth was twisted, and she blew

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By Clifton Johnson, Hadley, Mass. From *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XVIII (October-December, 1905), No. LXXI, pp. 322-323. Copyright, 19[illegible] by the American Folk-Lore Society. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

The story hails from Plymouth, Mass.—C. J.

this way (blowing out of the right corner of the mouth), and she couldn't blow out the light.

Then Mary spoke to one of her brothers and said, "Dick, will you blow out the light?"

"Yes, I will," was Dick's reply.

"Well, I wish you would," said Mary.

"Well, I will," Dick said.

So Dick blew, but his mouth was twisted, and he blew this way (blowing out of the left corner of the mouth), and he couldn't blow out the light.

Then Dick said, "John, will you blow out the light?"

"Yes, I will," was John's reply.

"Well, I wish you would," said Dick.

"Well, I will," John said.

So John blew, and his mouth was straight, and he blew this way (blowing straight), and he blew out the light.

The light was out and they were all glad that John had succeeded, and the father said, "What a blessed thing it is to have larnin'!"

## Borrowing Trouble

A folk-tale common and often quoted by country people belonging to the States of New York and Ohio, in ridicule of those who unnecessarily "borrow trouble," is as follows:—

Once there was a girl. One day her mother came into the kitchen and found the girl sitting crying with all her heart. The mother said, "Why, what is the matter?" The girl replied, "Oh, I was thinking. And I thought how some day perhaps I might be married and how I might have a baby, and then I thought how one day when it would be asleep in its cradle the oven lid would fall on it and kill it," and she began to cry again.

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From "Borrowing Trouble," by Fanny D. Bergen, *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XI (January-March, 1898), No. XL, pp. 55-59. Copyright, 1898, by the American Folk-Lore Society.

A variant from Greenfield, Mass., which can be traced back fifty years, runs thus:—

A girl sat on a river bank crying. On being asked the cause of her grief, she replied, "Oh, I was thinking if I had a darter and my darter had a darter and she should fall into the warter, how dreadful it would be."[1]

## Three More Fools

Once upon a time there was a woman with three girls. Her older girl was engaged to get married to a boy. So one day he come to the house to see this girl. Her mother sent one of the girls to the spring. She stay so long 'til her mother say, "Go to the spring and see what are sister doing." So when she got to the spring, she asked the girl what was she staying so long? "I am studying up a name for sister to name the baby when she marry."—"Well, that is a good

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[1] Both of these folk-jests are probably fragmentary survivals of a popular European folk-tale. In Mr. Joseph Jacobs's volume of "English Fairy Tales," the tale of "The Three Sillies" is a well-sustained story, having exactly the same *motif* as that which gives point to both of the very brief stories that I have found in the United States. In the English folk-tale the girl goes to the cellar to draw beer, and falls to crying after indulging in fancies similar to those of the girl in our American stories. There is a Scotch variant of the tale. Grimm's "Clever Elsie" is very similar to the English version of this old folk-tale. There is also more than one Russian variant. In "Bastianelo," No. 93, in Crane's "Italian Popular Tales," a bride goes down cellar to draw wine, and muses in the same manner. It is interesting to note little details that relate to the various environments where the tale takes root and becomes a part of the local folk-lore. In Germany and England, it is while drawing beer that the maiden falls into soliloquy. In Italy it is wine, the national beverage, that runs away while the girl goes on with her idle dreaming. In New York and Ohio, where the great brick ovens were so often built into the wall beside the kitchen chimney, it is the oven lid that will fall and kill the sleeping child. The Western Massachusetts variant, told in the midst of the great meadows over which meander their rivers, describes the girl as sitting on a river bank while she worries over the drowning of her future grandchild. These stories are told in the United States as true, and the incidents are generally supposed to have happened long ago in the same neighborhood.—F. D. B.

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From "Folk-Lore from Aiken, S. C.," by Elsie Clews Parsons, *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. 34 (January-March, 1921), No. 131, pp. 18-19. Copyright, 1921, by the American Folk-Lore Society.

Written by Emma Lee Quarles. For bibliography see Memoirs of the Americ Folk-Lore Society, Vol. XIII, p. 128, note 3.

idea. I guess I had better study too." So she sit down to help study. So they stay so long 'til her mother went down there to see what they were doing. She ask them what they were doing. They told her they was studying a name for sister to name the baby when she marry. "Well, that is a good idea; I guess I had better study too." So she sit down to study too. They stay so long 'til the last girl went what had the company. "What are you all doing?"—"Sat down study up a name for sister to name the baby when she marry."—"Well, that is a good idea; I guess I had better study." So they sat down to study. So the boy went down there. He asked them what they was doing there? Say they was studying a name "for you and sister to name the baby when you are married." He told them that if he find three more fool like them, he would come back and marry the girl. So he went, an' he saw a lady scrubbing floor. She was trying to get the sun to come in to dry the floor with a wheelbarrow. The boy said, "What are you doing?"—"I am trying to get the sun in to dry my floor."—"Why don't you ask the door and let the sun shine in and dry it?"—"Well, that is a good idea." So he went, an' saw a man with a oxen. He say, "Try to get the oxen to climb up there[1] to eat the moss." He was just beating the oxen, trying to make him get up there to eat the moss. The boy say, "What are you doing?"—"I am trying to make the oxen eat the moss."—"Why don't you take a hoe and rake it down?"—"Well, that is a good idea." So the boy went until he came to a tree. He saw a man with a new pair of overalls. He was trying to jump in them, had them hanging up in the tree. He say, "Why don't you put a sheet on the ground and stand on the sheet an' put them on?" So he say he hadn' thought about that. So he went on back an' married the girl.

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[1] On the roof.

## The Talking Eggs

There was once a lady who had two daughters; they were called Rose and Blanche. Rose was bad, and Blanche was good; but the mother liked Rose better, although she was bad, because she was her very picture. She would compel Blanche to do all the work, while Rose was seated in her rocking-chair. One day she sent Blanche to the well to get some water in a bucket. When Blanche arrived at the well, she saw an old woman, who said to her: "Pray, my little one, give me some water; I am very thirsty." "Yes, aunt," said Blanche, "here is some water"; and Blanche rinsed her bucket, and gave her good fresh water to drink. "Thank you, my child, you are a good girl; God will bless you."

A few days after, the mother was so bad to Blanche that she ran away into the woods. She cried, and knew not where to go, because she was afraid to return home. She saw the same old woman, who was walking in front of her. "Ah! my child, why are you crying? What hurts you?" "Ah, aunt, mamma has beaten me, and I am afraid to return to the cabin." "Well, my child, come with me; I will give you supper and a bed; but you must promise me not to laugh at anything which you will see." She took Blanche's hand, and they began to walk in the wood. As they advanced, the bushes of thorns opened before them, and closed behind their backs. A little farther on, Blanche saw two axes, which were fighting; she found that very strange, but she said nothing. They walked farther, and behold! it was two arms which were fighting; a little farther, two legs; at last, she saw two heads which were fighting, and which said: "Blanche, good morning, my child; God will help

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From *Louisiana Folk-Tales*, in French Dialect and English translation, collected and edited by Alcée Fortier, Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, Volume II, pp. 117-119. Copyright, 1895, by the American Folk-Lore Society. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

you." At last they arrived at the cabin of the old woman, who said to Blanche: "Make some fire, my child, to cook the supper"; and she sat down near the fireplace, and took off her head. She placed it on her knees, and began to louse herself. Blanche found that very strange; she was afraid, but she said nothing. The old woman put back her head in its place and gave Blanche a large bone to put on the fire for their supper. Blanche put the bone in the pot. Lo! in a moment the pot was full of good meat.

She gave Blanche a grain of rice to pound with the pestle, and thereupon the mortar became full of rice. After they had taken their supper, the old woman said to Blanche: "Pray, my child, scratch my back." Blanche scratched her back, but her hand was all cut, because the old woman's back was covered with broken glass. When she saw that Blanche's hand was bleeding, she only blew on it, and the hand was cured.

When Blanche got up the next morning, the old woman said to her: "You must go home now, but as you are a good girl I want to make you a present of the talking eggs. Go to the chicken-house; all the eggs which say 'Take me,' you must take them; all those which will say 'Do not take me,' you must not take. When you will be on the road, throw the eggs behind your back to break them."

As Blanche walked, she broke the eggs. Many pretty things came out of those eggs. It was now diamonds, now gold, a beautiful carriage, beautiful dresses. When she arrived at her mother's, she had so many fine things that the house was full of them. Therefore her mother was very glad to see her. The next day, she said to Rose: "You must go to the woods to look for this same old woman; you must have fine dresses like Blanche."

Rose went to the woods, and she met the old woman, who told her to come to her cabin; but when she saw the axes, the arms, the legs, the heads, fighting, and the old woman taking off her head to louse herself, she began to laugh and to ridicule everything she saw. Therefore the old woman said: "Ah! my child, you are not a good girl; God will punish you."

The next day she said to Rose: "I don't want to send you back with nothing; go to the chicken-house, and take the eggs which say 'Take me.' "

Rose went to the chicken-house. All the eggs began to say: "Take me," "Don't take me,"; "Take me," "Don't take me." Rose was so bad that she said: "Ah, yes, you say 'Don't take me,' but you are precisely those I want." She took all the eggs which said "Don't take me," and she went away with them.

As she walked, she broke the eggs, and there came out a quantity of snakes, toads, frogs, which began to run after her. There were even a quantity of whips, which whipped her. Rose ran and shrieked. She arrived at her mother's so tired that she was not able to speak. When her mother saw all the beasts and the whips which were chasing her, she was so angry that she sent her away like a dog, and told her to go live in the woods.

## The Singing Bones

Once upon a time there lived a man and a woman who had twenty-five children. They were very poor; the man was good, the woman was bad. Every day when the husband returned from his work the wife served his dinner, but always meat without bones.

"How is it that this meat has no bones?"

"Because bones are heavy, and meat is cheaper without bones. They give more for the money."

The husband ate, and said nothing.

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*Ibid.*, p. 61.

This is a variant of a story found everywhere. Informant, old Negress, 77 Esplanade Avenue, New Orleans.—A. F.

Cf. the tell-tale harp made of the drowned sister's bones and hair in Old World versions of the ballad of "The Twa Sisters."

"How is it you don't eat meat?"

"You forget that I have no teeth. How do you expect me to eat meat without teeth?"

"That is true," said the husband, and he said nothing more, because he was afraid to grieve his wife, who was as wicked as she was ugly.

When one has twenty-five children one cannot think of them all the time, and one does not see if one or two are missing. One day, after his dinner, the husband asked for his children. When they were by him he counted them, and found only fifteen. He asked his wife where were the ten others. She answered that they were at their grandmother's, and every day she would send one more for them to get a change of air. That was true, every day there was one that was missing.

One day the husband was at the threshold of his house, in front of a large stone which was there. He was thinking of his children, and he wanted to go and get them at their grandmother's, when he heard voices that were saying:

Our mother killed us,
Our father ate us.
We are not in a coffin,
We are not in the cemetery.

At first he did not understand what that meant, but he raised the stone, and saw a great quantity of bones, which began to sing again. He then understood that it was the bones of his children, whom his wife had killed, and whom he had eaten. Then he was so angry that he killed his wife; buried his children's bones in the cemetery, and stayed alone at his house. From that time he never ate meat, because he believed it would always be his children that he would eat.

## Tailypo

Once upon a time, way down in de big woods ob Tennessee, dey lived a man all by hisself. His house didn't hab but one room in it, an' dat room was his pahlor, his settin' room, his bedroom, his dinin' room, an' his kitchen, too. In one end ob de room was a great, big, open fiahplace, an' dat's wha' de man cooked an' et his suppah. An' one night atter he had cooked an' et his suppah, dey crep' in troo de cracks ob de logs de curiestes creetur dat you ebber did see, an' it had a *great, big long tail.*

Jis' as soon as dat man see dat varmint, he reached fur his hatchet, an' wid one lick, he cut dat thing's tail off. De creetur crep' out troo de cracks ob de logs an' run away, an' de man, fool like, he took an' cooked dat tail, he did, an' et it. Den he went ter bed, an' atter a while, he went ter sleep.

He hadn't been 'sleep berry long, till he waked up, an' heerd sumpin' climbin' up de side ob his cabin. It sounded jis' like a cat, an' he could heer it *scratch, scratch, scratch,* an' by-an'-by he heerd it say, *"Tailypo, tailypo; all I want's my tailypo."*

Now dis yeer man had t'ree dogs: one wuz called Uno, an' one wuz called Ino, an' de udder one wuz called Cumptico-Calico. An' when he heerd dat thing he called his dawgs, *huh! huh! huh!* an' dem dawgs cum bilin' out from under de floo', an' dey chased dat thing way down in de big woods. An' de man went back ter bed an' went ter sleep.

Well, way long in de middle ob de night, he waked up an' he heerd sumpin' right above his cabin doo', tryin' ter git in. He listened, an' he could heer it *scratch, scratch, scratch,* an'

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From *Negro Tales from West Virginia*, by John Harrington Cox, *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVII (October-December, 1934), No. CLXXXVI, pp. 341-342. New York.

Learned by the Editor from Mr. Richard Wyche, Honorary President of The Story-Tellers' League, Washington, D. C. Printed by his permission. A quite different version of this story is printed in Harris, *Uncle Remus Returns*, pp. 52-78.—J. H. C.

den he heerd it say, *"Tailypo, tailypo; all I want's my tailypo."* An' he sot up in bed and called his dawgs, *huh! huh! huh!* an' dem dawgs cum bustin' round de corner ob de house an' dey cotched up wid dat thing at de gate an' dey jis' tore de whole fence down, tryin' ter git at it. An' dat time, dey chased it way down in de big swamp. An' de man went back ter bed again an' went ter sleep.

Way long toward mornin' he waked up, an he heerd sumpin' down in de big swamp. He listened, an' he heerd it say, *"You know, I know; all I want's my tailypo."* An' dat man sot up in bed an' called his dawgs, *huh! huh! huh!* an' you know dat time dem dawgs didn' cum. Dat thing had carried 'em way off down in de big swamp an' killed 'em, or los' 'em. An' de man went back ter bed an' went ter sleep agin.

Well, jis' befo' daylight, he waked up an' he heerd sumpin' in his room, an' it sounded like a cat, climbin' up de civers at de foot ob his bed. He listened an' he could heer it *scratch, scratch, scratch,* an' he looked ober de foot ob his bed an' he saw two little pinted ears, an' in a minute, he saw two big, roun', fiery eyes lookin' at him. He wanted to call his dawgs, but he too skeered ter holler. Dat thing kep' creepin' up until by-an'-by it wuz right on top ob dat man, an' den it said in a low voice, *"Tailypo, tailypo; all I want's my tailypo."* An' all at once dat man got his voice an' he said, *"I hain't got yo' tailypo."* An' dat thing said, *"Yes you has,"* an' it jumped on dat man an' scratched him all to pieces. An' sum folks say he got his tailypo.

Now dey ain't nothin' lef' ob dat mans' cabin way down in de big woods ob Tennessee, 'ceptin' the chimbley, an' folks w'at lib in de big valley say dat when de moon shines bright an' de win' blows down de valley you can heer sumpin' say, "Tailypo . . . ," an' den, die away in de distance.

## The Singing Geese

A man went out one day to shoot something for dinner, and as he was going along, he heard a sound in the air above him and looking up saw a great flock of geese, and they were all singing.

"La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung, bung, bung, quilla bung."

He up with his gun and shot one of the geese and it sang as it fell,

"La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung, bung, bung, quilla bung."

He took it home and told his wife to cook it for dinner and each feather, as she picked it, flew out of the window. She put the goose in the stove, but all the time it was cooking, she could hear in muffled tones from the stove,

"La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung, bung, bung, quilla bung."

When the goose was cooked, she set it on the table, but as her husband picked up his knife and fork to carve it, it sang,

"La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung, bung, bung, quilla bung."

When he was about to stick the fork in the goose, there came a tremendous noise, and a whole flock of geese flew through the window singing,

"La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung, bung, bung, quilla bung."

And each one stuck a feather in the goose. Then they picked it up off the dish and all flew out of the window singing,

"La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung, bung, bung, quilla bung."

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From *Folk-Lore from Maryland*, collected by Annie Weston Whitney and Caroline Canfield Bullock, Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, Volume XVIII, 1925, p. 179. New York.

# II. Ghost, Witch, and Devil Tales

*Where folks believe in witches, witches air;*
*But when they don't believe, there are none there.*

## Introduction

### I AIN'T SKEERED O' NO HA'NTS

The fact that Americans have managed to keep alive and enjoy a large body of spectral lore and legend, long after they have ceased to take their supernatural beliefs seriously, is perhaps to be attributed more to their fondness for being hoaxed than to their fear of the invisible world, of things transcending nature and reason.

In "How to Tell a Story"[1] Mark Twain tells how in his recital of "The Golden Arm" he worked his audience up to an excruciating pitch with appropriate sound effects and the ha'nt's repeated wailing of "W-h-o——g-o-t——m-y——g-o-l-d-e-n *arm?"* leading up to the final startling *"You've got it!"* This favorite formula of a ghost or other dread creature ("Tailypo" or "The Hairy Toe"[2]) seeking to recover a lost or stolen object is treated with incongruous humor in "The Half-Clad Ghost" and with gruesome effect in "Cap'n Santos' Leg."

From the beginning ghost lore found a fertile soil in New England where the demands of "retributive justice" were satisfied by tales of the "haunted conscience" and where "strange apparitions" of all kinds were interpreted religiously as "prodigious warnings" and "memorable providences."

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[1] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 499-503.

[2] *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*, pp. 516-517.

Malignant specters also justified their existence by torturing persons condemned as witches and thus supplying "spectral evidence" of their guilt to the courts that tried them. The less serious wonders of the invisible world included the pranks and tricks of mischief-loving spirits, as in the famous "Stone Throwing Devil" of Portsmouth and the "Dancing Mortar" of Block Island.[1]

As a maritime region, New England also had its share of phantom ships, portending storms and ill luck, ships haunted or manned by ghostly crews ("The Dead Ship of Harpswell"[2]), and such haunted relics of shipwrecks as a salvaged cradle that always rocked during a gale.[3] A landlubber's variant of the "Flying Dutchman" legend is seen in William Austin's story of "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man."[4] Ghostly companies also haunt battlefields,[5] while hazardous occupations like mining and railroading are productive of ghosts of men killed at work, ominous or mischievous tapping ghosts (Tommy Knockers), phantom white mules, phantom lights and whistles, and wild trains ("The Phantom Train of Marshall Pass").

The localization of ghost stories results from the well-known tendency of grateful or accusing spirits of the dead (especially of those who died accidentally or violently) to haunt houses and places as well as persons and from the popular desire to surround old buildings and landmarks with striking, picturesque and romantic associations. Hence, the many local tales of protecting spirits guarding buried treasure and lost mines, in the wake of pirates and bandits, and condemned or consecrated souls inhabiting wild and lonely spots, often in connection with legends of lovers' leaps, murdered travelers, and vanishing hitchhikers.

While many ghosts are helpful and grateful, prophetic or warning, others are avenging or simply a nuisance, like the noisy, mischievous poltergeist ("The Bell Witch of Tennessee and Mississippi," an avenging as well as an annoying ha'nt, involved, like many a trickster or witch, in a feud). Thus the ha'nt degenerates into a spook, as when a prankster impersonates a ghost ("The Legend of Sleepy Hollow") or some overbold or gullible person accepts a challenge or wager to spend the night in a haunted house, with comic results (akin to the magic test in "Jack and the Fox").

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[1] *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, pp. 297-299.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 609-610. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 608-609.

[4] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 742-750.

[5] See "Ghosts of the Cedar Creek (Virginia) Battlefield," *A Treasury of Southern Folklore*, pp. 536-540.

## YOU HAIN'T KILLED OLD BETTY YET

The fairy faith, according to Whittier, "never had much hold on the Yankee mind, our superstitions being mostly of a stern and less poetical kind."[1] Yet the old fairy faith did not completely die. Some of it was transferred to the belief in witches or hags who, like fairies, continued to curdle milk, keep the butter from coming in the churn, ride horses at night, and work various other prankish or malicious spells and enchantments. Not only did the primitive American wilderness provide a suitable atmosphere for witchcraft and witch lore, but conditions were ripe for the spread of the witchcraft delusion in seventeenth-century New England. Transferring their attention from the Indian "devils" and "devil worshippers" who lurked in the forests to other scapegoats, the land-hungry and the devil-hungry waged a war of extermination against the innocent victims of mass hysteria. Thus, for reasons of personal greed or ambition as well as for the improvement of religion, the fear of bodily harm as the basis of popular beliefs in witchcraft was grimly exploited, with the remedy proving worse than the disease.

Since witch tales, like all folk tales, are universal in diffusion and local in adaptation, almost every town in New England had its local witches. In accordance with the tendency of superstitious fear and prejudice to fasten itself upon persons suspected of possessing extraordinary powers or conspicuous for singular or mysterious behavior, the "witch" or "wizard" was usually a surly, crabbed, ugly old eccentric and recluse, with a sharp eye and tongue, perhaps involved in a local feud or scandal. Though all witches tend to behave in much the same fashion, they become individually distinguished for some particular power or exploit. Thus Betty Booker, of Kittery, Maine, was a vengeful storm-breeding witch who, angered by Skipper Perkins' refusal to bring her a halibut, put a witch bridle on him and rode him down to York one wild and stormy night. Uncle Kaler, of Hallowell, Maine, who made good or bad weather to order, sometimes overdid it, as when a cloudburst to assist an eloping couple turned a peaceful little mill stream into a fearful gorge. Narragansett, Rhode Island, had its witch-weaver who could turn out more work in a week than any man-weaver in the province. Cape Cod boasted of its "Sea-Witch of Billingsgate," who cruised about in a whale, "with a ship's light hung to the creature's tail, luring unwary mariners on the shoals." One of her victims was the whalemaster, Captain Ichabod Paddock, whom the green-eyed witch won in a card game with the devil, and who subsequently killed her and her familiar, old Crook-Jaw, with the silver whaling iron given him by his wife.[1]

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[1] For these tales see *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, pp. 395-423.

While there is plenty of low comedy in the supernatural high-jinks of witches, witch-finding is replete with all the thrills and suspense of a mystery story. A favorite clue to the detection of the witch is a mutilated or missing hand or foot, corresponding to a cat's paw that has been shot or cut off. In addition to the silver bullet which alone proves fatal, when fired at the witch's animal shape (usually a black cat or a bird) or a drawing of her, other charms against witches are the usual sharp objects (knives, forks, scissors, needles), strong or strong-smelling substances (salt, pepper, sulphur, mustard, fern, or collard seed), and holy things (Bible, holy water, holy ground, the name of God), used against fairies and ghosts as well. One of the best ways to keep out a witch is to place a broom or hair brush by or over the door or a sifter under the pillow, because curiosity and suspicion prompt her to count every straw, bristle or hole therein. By the time she is finished, it is morning and she must be gone.

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[1] *Ibid.*

## STRAIGHT FROM HELL AND BACK AGAIN

In devil tales the miraculous intervention of malevolent spirits in human affairs continues with tragic and comic effect. Now the archfiend steps into the role of supernatural adversary for which nature, religion, and art intended him, endowing him with every resource of guile and wickedness. As rogue and trickster, he combines the talents of the heavy and the comic of old-fashioned melodrama. Whether in the guise of a lurid, sulphurous demon, with horns, pointed tail, and cloven hoofs, or of a silk-hatted gentleman with an "ambrosial curl" (to hide his horn) the devil "first plays the fox, afterwards the lion"—or, when beaten, the whipped cur.

In his adventures on earth (where most of his folktale exploits take place) he has such a hard time of it that he is often only too glad to slink back to his comfortable hell with his tail dragging between his legs. In addition to being stumped and cheated by his prospective victims or his enemies, who fight him with every means, fair or foul, at their disposal, he suffers public humiliation in being driven out of every self-respecting state in the union. In a Texas-Mexican folktale Satan is lured from hell by a deceiving vaquero, who describes the marvels of the state in typical Texas boaster-booster fashion. When Satan arrives in Texas, dressed in the latest New York style, he acts like a regular Eastern tourist and greenhorn. After being scorched and parched by the heat and blowing sand, burning his mouth badly on chili peppers, which he mistakes for red berries, and getting his mouth and tongue stuck full of thorns from a prickly pear, mistaken for a fig, he experiences the most humiliating defeat of all when, hoaxed by a cowboy prankster, he tries to throw a cow by squeezing its tail. The devil has never been seen in Texas since.[1]

In New England dour Puritans and sharp Yankees were especially hard on the devil. They lumped him and "devil-worshiping" Indians together in a war of extermination. And they used their sharpest business practice in their attempts to cheat him, successfully or not, out of his due. Thus General Jonathan Moulton of Hampton, New Hampshire, was often heard to say that "neither man or devil could get the better of him in a trade." And when, in an excess of avarice, he vowed "that he would sell his soul for the possession of unbounded riches," the devil took him at his word, which the crafty general promptly proceeded to break, although "Satan performed his part of the contract to the letter." According to the agreement, on the first day of every month a pair of boots (the biggest hip boots he could find) was hung on the crane in the fireplace and found the next morning stuffed full of guineas. One day the devil found the boots would not fill—pouring guineas into them was like pouring water into a rat-hole. He investigated and discovered that the greedy general had cut off the soles, and that as a result the chimney was choked up with guineas and the room was knee-deep in gold. In revenge the devil burned down the house. The General escaped with only his shirt on his back; and after his death, when his coffin was opened to quiet an ugly rumor, it was found to be empty.[2]

In "The Devil and Tom Walker"[3] and "The Devil and Daniel Webster," Washington Irving and Stephen Vincent Benet have rung the changes on Yankee avarice and the devil compact. Tom Walker, like General Moulton, proved too smart and too greedy for his own good; while Daniel

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[1] Jovita Gonzalez, "Tales and Songs of the Texas-Mexicans," *Man, Bird, and Beast*, Publications of the Texas Folklore Society, Vol. VIII (1930), pp. 106-109. See also Mary Austin, *One-Smoke Stories* (1934), p. 56.

[2] *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, pp. 379-382.

[3] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 731-740.

Webster wrested the soul of the unlucky Jabez Stone from the devil's clutches through his powers of oratory and argument.

To vary the contest, Strap Buckner, a Texas giant, challenges the devil to a mighty single combat,[1] and a slave named Balaam Foster[2] sells his soul for mastery of the violin, the devil's own instrument. To beat the devil at his own game magic is fought with magic as trickery is fought with trickery. In "The Devil Marriage" a witch guesses the devil's riddles, and in "Jack-O-My Lantern" the sign of the cross cut in the bark keeps the devil up a tree.

In place name legends, finally, the devil has left giant footprints on rocks and has given his name to rocks, cliffs, caves, glens, chasms, and other landmarks, whose singularity of size or shape or sinister atmosphere suggests "a more than mortal occupancy."[3]

—B. A. B.

## The Phantom Train of Marshall Pass

Soon after the rails were laid across Marshall Pass, Colorado, where they go over a height of twelve thousand feet above the sea, an old engineer named Nelson Edwards was assigned to a train. He had travelled the road with passengers behind him for a couple of months and met with no accident, but one night as he set off for the divide he fancied that the silence was deeper, the cañon darker, and the air frostier than usual. A defective rail and an unsafe bridge had been reported that morning, and he began the long ascent with some misgivings. As he left the first line of snowsheds he heard a whistle echoing somewhere among

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[1] H. F. McDanield and N. A. Taylor, *The Coming Empire* (1877), pp. 49-73.

[2] *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 727-731.

[3] *A Treasury of New England Folklore*, pp. 377-470 *passim*.

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From *Myths and Legends of Our Own Land*, by Charles M. Skinner, Vol. II, pp. 192-195. Copyright, 1896, by J. B. Lippincott Company. Philadelphia and London.

the ice and rocks, and at the same time the gong in his cab sounded and he applied the brakes.

The conductor ran up and asked, "What did you stop for?"

"Why did you signal to stop?"

"I gave no signal. Pull her open and light out, for we've got to pass No. 19 at the switches, and there's a wild train climbing behind us."

Edwards drew the lever, sanded the track, and the heavy train got under way again; but the whistles behind grew nearer, sounding danger-signals, and in turning a curve he looked out and saw a train speeding after him at a rate that must bring it against the rear of his own train if something were not done. He broke into a sweat as he pulled the throttle wide open and lunged into a snow-bank. The cars lurched, but the snow was flung off and the train went roaring through another shed. Here was where the defective rail had been reported. No matter. A greater danger was pressing behind. The fireman piled on coal until his clothes were wet with perspiration, and fire belched from the smokestack. The passengers, too, having been warned of their peril, had dressed themselves and were anxiously watching at the windows, for talk went among them that a mad engineer was driving the train behind.

As Edwards crossed the summit he shut off steam and surrendered his train to the force of gravity. Looking back, he could see by the faint light from new snow that the driving-wheels on the rear engine were bigger than his own, and that a tall figure stood atop of the cars and gestured frantically. At a sharp turn in the track he found the other train but two hundred yards behind, and as he swept around the curve the engineer who was chasing him leaned from his window and laughed. His face was like dough. Snow was falling and had begun to drift in the hollows, but the trains flew on; bridges shook as they thundered across them; wind screamed in the ears of the passengers; the suspected bridge was reached; Edwards's heart was in his throat, but he seemed to clear the chasm by a bound. Now the switch was in sight, but No. 19 was not there, and as the brakes were freed the train shot by like a flash. Suddenly a red light appeared ahead, swinging to and fro on the track. As well be run into behind as to crash into an obstacle ahead. He heard the whistle of the pursuing locomotive yelp behind him, yet he reversed the lever and put on brakes, and for a few seconds lived in a hell of dread.

Hearing no sound, now, he glanced back and saw the wild train almost leap upon his own—yet just before it touched it the track seemed to spread, the engine toppled from the bank, the whole train rolled into the cañon and vanished. Edwards shuddered and listened. No cry of hurt men or hiss of steam came up—nothing but the groan of the wind as it rolled through the black depth. The lantern ahead, too, disappeared. Now another danger impended, and there was no time to linger, for No. 19 might be on its way ahead if he did not reach the second switch before it moved out. The mad run was resumed and the second switch was reached in time. As Edwards was finishing the run to Green River, which he reached in the morning ahead of schedule, he found written in the frost of his cab-window these words: "A frate train was recked as yu saw. Now that yu saw it yu will never make another run. The enjine was not ounder control and four sexshun men wor killed. If yu ever run on this road again yu will be recked." Edwards quit the road that morning, and returning to Denver found employment on the Union Pacific. No wreck was discovered next day in the cañon where he had seen it, nor has the phantom train been in chase of any engineer who has crossed the divide since that night.

## The Death Waltz

Years ago, when all beyond the Missouri was a waste, the military post at Fort Union, New Mexico, was the only spot for miles around where any of the graces of social life could be discovered. Among the ladies at the post was a certain gay young woman, the sister-in-law of a captain, who enjoyed the variety and spice of adventure to be found there, and enjoyed, too, the homage that the young officers paid to her, for women who could be loved or liked were not many in that wild country. A young lieutenant proved especially susceptible to her charms, and devoted himself to her in the hope that he should ultimately win her hand. His experience with the world was not large enough to enable him to distinguish between the womanly woman and the coquette.

One day messengers came dashing into the fort with news of an Apache outbreak, and a detachment was ordered out to chase and punish the marauding Indians. The lieutenant was put in command of the expedition, but before starting he confided his love to the young woman, who not only acknowledged that she returned his affection, but promised that if the fortune of war deprived him of life she would never marry another. As he bade her good-by he was heard to say, "That is well. Nobody else shall have you. I will come back and make my claim."

In a few days the detachment came back, but the lieutenant was missing. It was noticed that the bride-elect grieved but little for him, and nobody was surprised when she announced her intention of marrying a young man from the East. The wedding-day arrived. All was gayety at the post, and in the evening the mess-room was decorated for a ball. As the dance was in full swing a door flew open with

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*Ibid.*, pp. 208-210.

a bang, letting in a draught of air that made the candles burn dim, and a strange cry, unlike that of any human creature, sounded through the house. All eyes turned to the door. In it stood the swollen body of a dead man dressed in the stained uniform of an officer. The temple was marked by a hatchet-gash, the scalp was gone, the eyes were wide open and burned with a terrible light.

Walking to the bride the body drew her from the arms of her husband, who, like the rest of the company, stood as in a trance, without the power of motion, and clasping her to its bosom began a waltz. The musicians, who afterward declared that they did not know what they were doing, struck up a demoniac dance, and the couple spun around and around, the woman growing paler and paler, until at last the fallen jaw and staring eyes showed that life was also extinct in her. The dead man allowed her to sink to the floor, stood over her for a moment, wrung his hands as he sounded his fearful cry again, then vanished through the door. A few days after, a troop of soldiers who had been to the scene of the Apache encounter returned with the body of the lieutenant.

## Cap'n Santos' Leg

"You fellers wouldn't remember old Cap'n John Santos—feller that had his leg et off by a shark on the Western Banks. But I can remember him, back when I was a boy, and how proud he was of the new juryleg they rigged him up with. It was a sight, I tell you, to watch him dance a *chamarita* with that leg and not nick the floor once. Carried

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From *Cape Cod Pilot*, by Jeremiah Digges, with Editorial and Research Assistance of the Members of the Federal Writers' Project, pp. 234-236. American Guide Series, Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration for the State of Massachusetts. Sponsored by Poor Richard Associates. Copyright, 1937, by Poor Richard Associates. Provincetown and New York: Modern Pilgrim Press and the Viking Press.

around furniture polish just like the doctor carries iodine, in case of a cut or scratch, and one time he copper-bottomed her to make sure the worms wouldn't get to him before his time.

"Well, you know once a man is chawed on by a shark, he's shark-jonahed for the rest of his life. Some day a shark's going to get the rest of that feller, if he keeps on going to sea. And Cap'n John kept on.

"The Cap'n's trawler, the *Hetty K,* was ten mile from the Race when the Portland Gale struck. That was November 27. On the 28th she come crippling round the Point under bare poles with two foot of harbor water over her lee rail. The crew said Cap'n John was washed overboard, along with two other men.

"The bodies of the other two drifted ashore; the Cap'n wasn't never found. But a couple of days after, Joe Barcia picked up the old man's wooden leg off the beach. He took it home to Mary Santos, the widow.

"Married thirty years, them two. When Joe Barcia brought back the leg, Mary took it into the house. She petted it and talked to it.

"Nothing more come of it till the night of November 26, a year later. That night, Mary said, she set up in bed, and there, standing straight as two yards of pump-water on his one leg, was old Cap'n John. He hopped over alongside the bed and canted over. Then he whispered to her.

" 'Barometer's falling, Mary,' he says, 'and the wind's no'theast. We're in for thick weather, and I'll want my store leg to keep me steady when she strikes.' He pinched her cheek, and Mary let out a yell. When she looked again, the Cap'n was gone.

"Next morning, Mary said, she had a little red spot on her cheek. And before she turned in that night, she took the skipper's leg out of the spice-cupboard and left it laid out for him in a corner near the fireplace.

"That night a breeze of wind come up, and in a couple of hours it turned into a living gale—from the no'theast. The willer tree outside howled like the yo-ho bird of every dead sailor in hell come there to roost. All of a sudden Mary hears a thump-thump-thump across the floor, down below, and then the door shut to. She stayed in bed.

"Next morning she went to look if the Cap'n's leg was still there. It was, but when she picked it up, it was wet.

"Well, it'd rained bad enough to come in by the chimney. But it gallied her so, the sight of that leg, with the water on it, that she got sick. She called in Doc Atwood. When he got through sounding, and didn't find nothing sprung, Doc said something was eating on her. Then she told him the whole story.

"When he'd went over the leg, he looked hard at the widow.

" 'You say you left it by the fireplace all night and rain come in on it?' he asks. Then he sets the leg down, comes over to the widow, and tells her straight out. 'Mrs. Santos,' he says, 'I'm going to ask you to have one of the men take this thing out to sea, and weight it with netleads, and heave it overboard. I'm a doctor,' he says, 'and I don't listen to stories. But Mrs. Santos,' he says, 'I put my tongue to that wood. *It don't rain salt water!*' "

## The Half-Clad Ghost

"I knew a' ole man once that alluz wo' two paiah o' draw's. But when he died his wife didn' lay out but one paiah foh 'im. Well, after de fune'l, he kep' a-comin' back an' a-comin' back. Evah night he'd come right in dat front do' o' her house. So she moved from dat place, but he jes' kep' a-comin' jes' de same. She moved fo' o' five times, an'

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From "Dyin' Easy," by Martha Emmons, *Tone the Bell Easy*, Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, edited by J. Frank Dobie, Number X, p. 59. Copyright, 1932, by the Texas Folk-Lore Society. Austin.

As told by Elmira Johnson, of Waco, Texas.

he jes' kep' a-comin' back evah night o' de worl'. Finely she talked to some o' her frien's. They asked 'er why she don' talk to 'im. She say 'cause she scared to. But they say foh 'er to say, 'What in de name o' de Lawd do you want?' So dat night he come ag'in.

"This time she walk' right up an' met 'im an' say, 'What in de name o' de Lawd do you want?'

"He looked at 'er right study foh a long time, but she nevah move, an' she jes' stan' theah; an' finely he say, 'Honey, gimme 'nother paiah o' draw's, please.'

"She say, 'Aw right, I'll give 'em to you'; an' from dat day to this he nevah has come back no mo', she say. An' dat's de way it is: When you ask 'em what in de name o' de Lawd they want, an' then tell 'em you'll give it to 'em, they'll go 'way an' leave you alone."

## Till Whalem-Balem Comes

Well, that ain't no preacher ghost story at all. I heard tell 'bout preacher was offered so much money would he stay in ha'nted house all night. So he goes an' takes Bible an' sets down important like an' opens up Bible an' begins to read. 'Bout that time first ghost comes sneakin' in like hot air or maybe like cold breeze an' wet, look lak man only ain't got no head, 'scusin' if he have head ain't got no body, else if he have body ain't got no arms. So he says to preacher, "Is you gonna stay here till Whalem-Balem comes?"

Old man so skeered he don't say nothin'. So nex' ghost come in he look lak mule, maybe old gray mule only he ain't got no head neither, 'scusin' if he got long-eared head, ain't got no body. So he says to preacher, "Is you gonna stay here till Whalem-Balem comes?"

Still the old man so skeered he don't know whut to do;

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From *Cold Blue Moon, Black Ulysses Afar Off*, by Howard W. Odum, pp. 22-24. Copyright, 1931, by Howard W. Odum. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Publishers.

thinks maybe he better be goin', neither can he move. So 'bout that time, third ghost comes in, look lak cat, only biggest cat anybody ever seen, got red eyes lak fire and spittin' and mewin' like red-hot stove or sumpin'. So he meows, "Is you gonna stay here till Whalem-Balem comes?"

'Bout that time old preacher ain't got no voice an' feel mighty sick at his stomach and decided maybe he better make him little coffee and fry some meat. So he does. 'Bout time he be ready to drink his hot flambotia strong, fo'th ghost comes in, look lak dog, only got big tushes lak boar. So he reaches down an' et up all meat an' lap up all coffee. He then snaps up at preacher with tushes all showin' an' like impudent snarl, maybe snappin' teeth together like wolf, "Is you gonna stay here till Whalem-Balem comes?"

So old preacher hollers, "Hell, no, I'm done gone."

Singin' High-Stepper Lawd, you shall be free,
Yes, when the Good Lawd sets you free;
I'm on my way an' can't turn back,
Lawd, I'm on my way an' can't turn back.

## The Bell Witch of Tennessee and Mississippi

Back in the days before the War there lived somewhere in old North Carolina a man by the name of John Bell. Bell was a planter and was well-fixed. He had a good-sized plantation and a dozen niggers of field-hand age, and mules and

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By Arthur Palmer Hudson and Pete Kyle McCarter. From *The Journal of American Folk-Lore,* Vol. XLVII (January-March, 1934), No. CLXXXIII, pp. 45-63.

The legend of the Bell Witch recounts the misfortunes of a family named Bell who moved from North Carolina to the midlands of Tennessee in the early 1800's and then, in one branch, to northern Mississippi, about forty years later. It is well known to oral tradition in the designated sections of the two latter states. The Tennessee versions of it have been made the subject of at least two obscurely published books. In 1894, at Clarksville, Tennessee, appeared M. V. Ingram's *An Authenticated History of the Famous Bell Witch. The Wonder of the 19th Century, and Unexplained Phenomenon of the Christian Era. The Mysterious Talking Goblin that Terrorized the West End of Robertson County, Tennessee, Tormenting John Bell to his Death. The Story of Betsy Bell, Her* cows and hogs a-plenty. His family was made up of his wife, a daughter thirteen or fourteen years old they say was mighty pretty, and two or three young-uns that don't figure much in this story. Until he hired him an overseer, Bell got along fine.

The overseer was a Simon Legree sort of fellow, always at sixes and sevens with other folks, and especially with the niggers. He didn't even mind jawing with his boss. They say Mr. Bell was half a mind to fire the scoundrel and hire another one. But he tended to his business. He had a way with the women-folks. Some say he had an eye open for Mary, the daughter. And Mrs. Bell stood up for him. So he stayed on for a good while, and the longer he stayed the uppiter he got. Whenever he and Bell had a row—and their rows got bigger and bitterer—the overseer went out and blacksnaked three or four niggers, for they were the only critters in the shape of man that he could abuse without a come-back. He was the worst kind of a bully, and a man

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*Lover and the Haunting Sphinx.* This book professes "to record events of historical fact, sustained by a powerful array of incontrovertible evidence. . . . The author only assumes to compile data, formally presenting the history of this greatest of all mysteries, just as the matter is furnished to hand, written by Williams Bell, a member of the family some fifty-six years ago, together with corroborative testimony by men and women of irreproachable character and unquestioned veracity." Ingram's book is now rare and hard to get. Drawing on much the same sources and telling much the same story is Harriett Parks Miller's *The Bell Witch of Middle Tennessee* (Clarksville, 1930). This pamphlet and letters from residents of Middle Tennessee attest the independent oral survival of the legend in that region. As late as 1910 it was still told, "under the most appropriate surroundings—country parties, hayrides, and fireside gatherings."

In northern Mississippi, where descendants of the original family concerned still live, the legend survives in somewhat fragmentary but independent, orally traditional form. Of the considerable number of people who told it, or parts of it, to us, a few said that they had seen "the book" (Ingram's) a long time ago, and most of the others had heard of the book; but we were unable to find a copy in Mississippi.

Our following version of the legend has been recovered exclusively from oral tradition in Mississippi, and was put together before we ever saw a printed version. Most of our sources know the main outlines but remember especially some particular episodes or motives. A few tell the whole substantially as we reproduce it. But there is great diversity in the details and motives. We have taken the main outline on which all agree and have sketched in, as consistently as possible, the minutiae from numerous Mississippi sources. The dialect used, the few simple figures of speech, and the folk locutions are genuine and are true to the speech of our informants.—A. P. H. and P. K. M.

of high temper, in fact, a regular overseer of the kind you hear about in Yankee stories.

Mr. Bell had a tall temper too, and the men did not spend a lot of time patting each other on the back and bragging about each other's good points. A stand-up fight was bound to come off.

It did. Some say it was about the way the overseer had beat up one of the niggers. Some say it was about something Mr. Bell heard and saw from behind a cotton-house one day when Mary rode through the field where the overseer was working a gang of niggers. Bell went away blowing smoke from his pistol barrel, and mumbling something about white trash. The overseer didn't go away at all.

Of course Bell was brought into court, but he plead self-defense, and the jury let him off. He went home, hired him another overseer, and allowed that everything was settled. But the truth was that everything was now plumb unsettled.

That year and the next and the next the crops on the Bell place were an out-and-out failure: bumblebee cotton and scraggly tobacco and nubbin corn. His mules died of colic or some strange disease like it. His cows and hogs got sick of something the horse-doctor couldn't cure. He had to sell his niggers one by one, all except an old woman. Finally he went broke. He got what he could for his land—lock, stock, and barrel—and moved with his family to Tennessee. They say that where he settled down the town of Bell, Tennessee, was named for him. Anyway, he bought him a house and a patch of land near the home of old Andy Jackson, who had knocked off from being President and was living in a big house called the Hermitage.

Not long after the move to Tennessee, strange things began to happen in the Bell home. The children got into the habit of tumbling, or being tumbled, out of bed at least once a week, and of waking up every morning with every stitch of the bed-clothes snatched off and their hair all tangled and mussed up. Now for young-uns to tumble out of bed and to wake up in the morning with their heads uncombed is a mighty strange thing, and the Bells realized it. The children couldn't explain this carrying-on, for they were always asleep till they hit the floor; and it was a peculiar fact that they were never tumbled out while awake.

The old nigger woman told them it was the ha'nt of the overseer Mr. Bell had killed that was pestering the children. She was as superstitious as any other nigger, and she said she had always felt jubous about what the ha'nt of a man like the overseer would do. But she had spunk, and one day she allowed she would find out whether she was right by spending the night under the young-uns' bed. In the middle of the night Mr. and Mrs. Bell were fetched out of their bed by a squall like a pant'er's. When they lit a lamp and ran into the room, they found the old nigger woman sprawled in the middle of the floor, dripping cold sweat like an ash-hopper, her face gray-blue as sugar-cane peeling, and her eyes like saucers in a dish-pan. She was stiff-jointed and tongue-tied. When they got her sitting up and her tongue loosened, she screeched: "Hit's him! Hit's him! Fo' Gawd, hit's him! Hit peenched me all over, stuck pins in me, snatched de keenks outen ma haiuh, an' whup me, Lawd Gawd, how hit whup me, whup me limber and whup me stiff, whup me jes' lack *him*. Ain't gwine back dauh no mo,' ain't gwine back dauh no mo'."

The Bells were so scared they told some of the neighbors. Old Andy Jackson heard about it and decided to ride over. He didn't take any stock in ha'nts, and as he rode through the gate he spoke his mind out loud about tarnation fools that believed nigger tales about them. He hadn't got the words out of his mouth before something whaled him over the head and skipped his hat twenty or thirty yards back down the road. Old Andy didn't say any more. He motioned his nigger boy to hand him his hat, and he went away from there.

It seems like the Witch could get hungry like folks, and was satisfied with folks' grub. But it had to be the best. One day the old nigger woman came tearing into the front room where Mrs. Bell was quilting and said the Witch was back in the kitchen drinking up all the sweet milk.

Mrs. Bell was scared and said the old woman was lying.

"Come see fo' yo'se'f, missus. Come see fo' yo'se'f. Ah was back dauh a-mixin' up de biscuit, an' Ah retched ovah to git a cup o' miu'k, an' fo' Gawd, de cup was in de middle o' de auh, an' de miu'k was a-runnin' rat outen hit—an' hit wa'n't gwine nowheah, missus—hit wa'n't gwine nowheah. Jes' run outen de cup, an' den Ah couldn' see hit no mo'."

"You're just seeing things," said Mrs. Bell.

"Jes' whut Ah ain' doin'—ain' seein' de miu'k. Go on back in de kitchen efen you don' believe hit. Go on back dauh an' look fo' yo'se'f. . . . No, ma'am, Ah hain' gwine back in dat place. No, ma'am, dat ha'nt kin guzzle an' bile up all de miu'k de cows evah give 'fo' Ah raise mah finger to stop hit."

Mrs. Bell went back into the kitchen and looked. There was a cup there that had had milk in it, and the milk was gone, sure as shootin'. She was now as scared as the old nigger woman, and sent right away for her husband to come out of the field.

They couldn't figure out how a ghost could drink milk, or what becomes of the milk if he does. Does the milk dry up into the ghost of itself? If not, where does it go when the ghost swallows it? Ghosts can't be seen. At least, this one couldn't. They could see through where it was. If they could see through it, why couldn't they see the milk as plain when it was inside the ghost as when it was outside? The old nigger woman said the milk was running out of the cup, but it "wa'n't gwine nowheah." An old Holy Roller preacher from down in Tallahatchie bottom who rode over to talk about it argued that if the old woman's tale was so milk must be of a higher class than folks. When it turns into the soul of itself, it leaves nothing behind; but folks leave behind a corpse that must be covered up with dirt right away. Folks argued about it on front galleries in the summer time and around the fire in winter—but they didn't argue about it on the Bells' front gallery or by the Bells' fire. And the preachers preached about it at camp meetings.

But the Witch didn't let up on the Bells' grub. No one ever saw it; but lots of times some member of the family would see something to eat dive out of the cupboard or pop out of the safe. The Witch's favorite was cream, and he got to skimming it from every pan in the spring-house. The Bells were never able to get any butter from the churning.

Mr. Bell might have stood for having his young-uns' rest disturbed and his old nigger woman all tore up this way, but he couldn't stand for letting the ghost eat him out of house and home. So he called the family together and allowed he would move again—this time to Mississippi, where land was rich and cheap. Mrs. Bell raised up.

"Pa," said she, "it seems like to me we have been gettin' along tolerable well here. I don't see any use moving away. What would be to keep the Witch from following us down there?"

"Nothing in the world," spoke up a hide-bottomed chair from a corner of the room. "I'll follow you wherever you go," the Chair went on. "And I'll tell you what: if you stay on here, I won't bother you much; but if you go traipsing off to Mississippi—well, you'll wish you hadn't."

Mr. Bell was scared and bothered, but he studied a while and screwed up his courage enough to ask the Witch why he couldn't live where he pleased. But there was no answer. He asked some more questions. But the Chair had lapsed into the habit of silence that chairs have.

Mary, Mr. Bell's daughter, was now old enough to argue with the old folks about things. She was pretty as a spotted puppy, they say, and had lots of spunk and took after her pa. She sided with him. Girls always like to be moving. So when the family got over its scare about the Chair they argued back and forth. But finally Mrs. Bell and what they remembered about the Witch got the upper hand. Mr. Bell and Mary gave up the idea of moving to Mississippi—for a while anyway.

And for a while the Witch eased up on them. It even did some good turns. One day Mr. Bell was talking of visiting a family across the creek where he had heard everybody was sick. "I have just come from there," said a Voice from the eight-day clock, and went on to tell how well everybody was and what everybody was doing. Later Mr. Bell met up with a member of the family and learned that everything the Witch said was so.

Maybe because she had taken side with him in the argument about going to Mississippi, the Witch was partial to Mrs. Bell. The old nigger woman said the ha'nt sided with her because she had stood up for the overseer when Mr. Bell wanted to fire him in North Carolina.

One Christmas time the family was invited to a taffy-pulling. Mrs. Bell was sick and couldn't go. They talked about whether they ought to go off and leave their mammy feeling poorly. Mr. Bell was invited too, and they needed him to do the driving; so Mary and the children begged him to take them. Mrs. Bell told them to go ahead, she didn't need them and could make out all right. So they all piled into the wagon and started.

But before they got far one of the wagon wheels flew off and let the axle down into the road with a bump. It looked like a common accident, and the old man climbed down and put the wheel back on the axle and stuck the linchpin in. He looked at all the other linchpins and saw they were on all right. Before long another wheel flew off. They looked on the ground for the linchpin but couldn't find it there. Mr. Bell whittled a new one, and when he went to put the wheel back on he found the old one in place. He fixed the wheel and drove off again, telling all of the children to watch all of the wheels. Soon they saw something like a streak of moonshine dart around the wagon, and all four wheels flew off, and the wagon dropped kersplash into a mud-hole. They put them back on, turned round, and drove back home, going quiet and easy, like sitting on eggs.

When they got there, they found their mammy sitting up by the Christmas tree eating a plate of fresh strawberries, and feeling lots better.

Other pranks were laid to the Witch. Often when the old man and the boys would go to the stable to catch the horses and mules for the day's plowing or a trip to town, the critters would back their ears and rare and kick and stomp like hornets or yellow-jackets were after them. Some morning they would be puny as chickens with the pip, and caked with sweat and mud, and their manes and tails tangled in witch-locks. The neighbors said that off and on they met an unbridled and bare-backed horse, and the horse would stop, and something on his back that they couldn't see would talk to them—but not long—they had business the other way.

Maybe because Mary had sided with her pa against her mammy and the Witch, the Witch was harder on her after the argument than anybody else. She would wake up in the middle of the night, screaming and crying that something cold and heavy had been sitting on her breast, sucking her breath and pressing the life out of her.

One time she was getting ready to go to a play-party. Some of the young sprouts were waiting for her in the front room. While she was combing her long, black hair, it suddenly was full of cuckleburs. She tugged and pulled and broke the comb to untangle it, and when she couldn't, she leaned on the bureau and cried.

"I put them in your hair," said the Witch from the looking-glass. "You've got no business going to the party. Stay here with me. I can say sweet things to you."

She screamed, and the young fellows rushed in the room, and when she told them about the Voice they shot at the glass with their pistols. But the glass didn't break. And the Witch caught every bullet and pitched it into their vest pockets and laughed. So they called it a draw and went out of there. And Mary stayed at home.

Mary was now mighty near grown. She had turned out to be a beautiful woman. She had lots of beaux. But whenever one of them screwed himself up to the point of popping the question he always found that the words stuck in his throat and his face and ears burned. For young fellows these were strange signs. But it was always that way. And none of them seemed to be able to ask Mary the question. They laid it on the Witch, and finally quit hitching their horses to the Bell fence.

All but one. His name was Gardner. He was a catch for any girl, smart as a briar, good-looking, easy-going and openhearted, and the owner of rich bottom land, a passel of niggers, and a home as big as the courthouse, with columns as tall and white. He got all wrapped up in Mary, and they say Mary was leaning to him.

The way of the Witch with him was different, more businesslike. Maybe it was because the Witch realized this was the man Mary was setting her heart on. One night when Gardner was walking up the row of cedars in the Bell yard to see Mary, something he couldn't see reached out from a big cedar and touched him on the shoulder, and a voice said, "Wait a minute." Gardner was afraid to wait, but he was more afraid to run. So he waited.

"You might as well understand, here and now, that you are not going to have Mary Bell."

"Why not?" Gardner asked.

"You might have guessed from all that's happened round here. I'm in love with her myself. It's going to be hard to get her consent, and it may be harder to get the old man's. But she's not going to marry you. I'll see to that. If you open your mouth about it to-night, you'll be dead as a door-nail before morning."

Gardner studied a while and said, "If you'd only come out like a man."

The cedar tree stepped out and snatched his hat off and stomped it.

"Well, I reckon I'll have to lay off for a while," says Gardner. "But I do love her, and I'd go to the end of the world for. . . ."

"Well, you don't have to go that far, and it wouldn't do you any good if you did, and if you love her the only way you can keep her out of hell is to get out yourself. If you keep on hanging round here, I'll make it hell for you. Now this is how far you go. Pack up your traps and get out of the country, hide and hair. Go any place you think the Bells won't hear tell of you—and go before breakfast. If you slip out quiet without raising any rookus I'll never pester you again. What's more, on the day you get married I'll give you a pair of new boots you'll be proud of all your life."

Gardner couldn't see why the Witch's promise of a pair of wedding boots was in the same class as the threat of death before breakfast, but he didn't split hairs, and he didn't argue any more. He picked up his hat, sneaked back to his horse, and rode off.

He never said or wrote a thing to the Bells about what had happened, part because he was scared, but more because he was ashamed of being scared. He left the neighborhood before sunup and moved to the western part of the state. He got somebody else to sell out for him. They say the town of Gardner, where he settled, was named after him when he got old and respected.

After he had been there a while he fell in love with a girl and got engaged to her. And they say that when he was dressing for the wedding he couldn't find his boots. He looked high and low, every place a pair of boots was liable to be and lots of places where they couldn't possibly be, but no boots could he find. He was about to give up and go to his wedding in his sock feet, when a Voice told him to crawl out from under the bed and look in the bed. And there between the sheets he found a pair of shiny new boots. He put them on and went his way rejoicing and thinking of how well a ghost kept his word, and wondering if the boots would ever wear out and if they were like the Seven-League boots he had read about in old McGuffey.

But they looked like natural boots. He told some of his friends how he had got them. They thought he was a liar. But they had to own up they were wrong. One day Gardner's house-boy made a mistake and carried them instead of another pair to a cobbler. The cobbler said they were in perfect shape, that they were not made by mortal hands, and that the soles were sewed on in a way that no man or man-made machine could have stitched them. And there is a lady in this neighborhood who has seen the boots.

While Gardner's mind was getting mossed over about Mary, Mr. Bell decided again to move to Mississippi. It looked like his move from North Carolina was jumping from the frying pan into the fire, but he figured maybe the skillet wouldn't be any hotter. Gardner's break-up with Mary and Mary not marrying hung heavy on his mind. Mrs. Bell raised up again, telling him about rolling stones. And the Witch horned in. By this time the family got used to the Witch and would talk free with him, but respectful. Every time the question came up there was a row between Mr. Bell and Mary on one side and Mrs. Bell and the Witch on the other. The old nigger woman told Mr. Bell the ha'nt didn't want him to move because he was afraid of witch hunters in Mississippi. She said there were powerful ones down there.

And so one winter after the crops had petered out on him again, he sold his place dirt cheap. But the old nigger woman told him to wait till spring to start. She said Easter was early that year and there would be plenty of time to pitch a crop. Good Friday would be a good day to leave, she said, for the ha'nt would have to go back to his grave and stay three days under the ground and would be puny-like several days more. While he was in good working order he could be in two or three places at once and be in any of them in the bat of an eye, but then he would have to lie low, and that would give them plenty of start. So Mr. Bell early on Good Friday stacked his furniture and duds in a couple of wagons, climbed into the front one with Mary, put the old nigger woman and his biggest boy into the hind one, and told Mrs. Bell, "Git in with old Patsy if you're a-comin', and don't forgit the young-uns."

And that was the way the Bell family came to Mississippi. Mr. Bell bought him a little place in Panola County, ten miles east of Batesville on the Oxford road. He was all ready to begin life over again without supernatural interference.

But the Witch made a quick come-back, not before the family got there, but before they moved into their new home.

When Mr. Bell first got to Batesville, or Panola as they called it then, he left the family there and went out to look at the land he aimed to buy. When he got a place that suited him, he went back to town for his family and stuff. There was some sort of hitch, and the wagons did not get started till late in the evening. As the wagons moved slowly out of town, dark clouds began to roll up in the south and west, and before they had gone three miles the storm broke. Dark came on earlier than usual, for the clouds hid the sun. The rain beat down on the wagon covers. Every now and then the lightning flashes lit up the swaying trees on each side of the road, the draggle-tailed horses, and the road itself—a long, muddy creek—and then it was dark as a stack of black cats. The folks all stopped talking. There was nothing to listen to but the beating rain and the thunder and the suck of the horses' feet and the wheels in the mud.

All at once the hind wagon, with the family in it, slid to the side of the road and sunk into the mud up to the bed. Mr. Bell saw it in a lightning flash and came back. It couldn't be moved; the horses had no foothold, and the wheels were in too deep. The fix they were in wasn't dangerous, but it was mighty uncomfortable.

And then the Witch took a hand.

"If you'll go back to your wagon and stop your cussin'," said the empty dark beside the wagon, "I'll get you out. Hump it back to your wagon now—light a shuck!"

Mr. Bell waded back and crawled in.

And then the horses and the wagon and the furniture and the family and the dog under the wagon and the calf tied behind and everything else but the mud on the wheels riz up about eight feet high and floated down the road till they were just behind the front wagon, and then they settled down easy and went on home without any trouble.

The family got settled down in their two-story double-loghouse amongst the cedars on the Oxford road.

A few nights later, the Witch spoke up from one of the andirons and told Mr. and Mrs. Bell he was in love with Mary. He said he wanted to marry her. Mr. Bell was shocked and surprised. He explained, respectful but emphatic like, that he could never dream of letting a daughter of his marry a ghost, not even so noble a ghost like the one he was talking with.

"I got a claim on you, John Bell," said the Witch. "I got a claim on you and yours. I got a claim." And his voice was deep and hollowlike.

This was a point Mr. Bell maybe didn't want to hear any more about. So he said, "Have you spoken to Mary?"

"No, not spoken."

"Well, how do you know she would have you?"

"I don't. But I haven't got any reason to believe she wouldn't love me. She's never seen me. She doesn't know whether she would or not. Maybe she would consider it an honor to be married to a ghost. Not many girls are, you know. Why, it would make her famous."

"I don't want any daughter of mine getting famous that way. And besides, what if you were to have children? What in the world do you reckon they'd be like? Like you or her? Maybe half good human meat and bone, and the other half sight unseen. Or maybe they'd be the vanishin' kind and goin' round here and raisin' hell invisible. Do you think I want a passel of soap-suds young-uns floatin' round here and poppin' up into puffs of wind every time I p'inted to the stovewood pile or sprouts on a ditch bank? Not on your life. I reckon plain flesh and blood's good enough for Mary."

"But, John Bell, I love Mary. And remember. Remember."

"So do I, and that's why I'm not a-goin' to let you marry her. Why, when she got old and hard-favored I reckon you'd quit her for some young hussy. You could do it easy enough. Mary'd have a hard time keepin' up with a stack of wind and a voice, and I'd have a hard time trackin' down and shootin' a low-down, no-count dust devil. When Mary marries, she marries a man that's solid and alive in body."

"I gather, John Bell, that you're opposed to me courting your daughter. But she's the one to say, and I'm going to talk to her about it. You'll be my father-in-law yet, or you'll be a-mourning, a-mourning."

"But what kind of wedding would it be like?" Mrs. Bell put in. "Think of it. Mary standing in front of the preacher and the preacher saying, 'Do you take this woman?' to a vase of flowers. And the ring floating down to Mary from the hanging-lamp maybe, or rising up from under a bench. I won't stand for it. I've stood for a lot of things, and you can't say I haven't been a friend to you. But I won't stand for Mary being a laughing-stock and disgrace to the family."

"If we're a-goin' to add to this family," Mr. Bell took up, "we're a-goin' to be able to see what we're addin'. I don't even know what shape you've got, if any."

"Oh, I can give you some idea what shape I have. I'll let you shake hands with me. But you must promise not to squeeze. We're very delicate, especially when we touch folks. Here, hold out your hand, and I'll put mine in it."

Mr. Bell held out his hand, felt something, and grabbed it. It was, he said later, the hand of a new-born baby—soft and crinkly and warm and just about the size of a new-born baby's hand.

"How big are you all over?" he asked.

"I can't tell you that."

"Well, there's one other thing I want to know. How do you get into this house any time you want to when every window and door is locked and barred? Do you ooze through the walls?"

"No. It's a lot easier than that. If you'll watch the corner of the ceiling up there, you'll see."

And all the rest of his life Mr. Bell swore to trustworthy witnesses that he saw the corner of the ceiling raised a good three feet and then let down again—all without the slightest racket.

"Do you mean to tell me that anything with a hand like that can h'ist the top off of the house that a-way?"

"Sure," came the answer. "But—about Mary. I'm going to talk to her right off."

"Don't," said Mr. Bell. "Do you want to drive her crazy?"

But the meeting was over, for there was no answer. And the fire had died down, and the andiron looked glum.

The story is kind of skimpy here. Nobody seems to know what the Witch said to Mary or what Mary said to the Witch.

But the family noticed next day that she was drooping and wasn't minding what was going on around her. For days she wandered about the house and up and down the yard under the gloomy old cedars, like somebody sleep-walking.

And the color left her face, and deep in her wide-open black eyes was a far-away look, like she was trying to see something that ought to be but wasn't there. Every day she got up later and went to bed earlier.

And finally there came a day when she didn't get up at all. In the evening a screech-owl hollered in a cedar right by the gallery.

That night her fever was high, and by midnight she was raving. "We've put off seein' a doctor too long," said Mrs. Bell.

"The roads like they are, it'll take me two hours goin' and him and me two hours comin'," said Mr. Bell. "It'll be might' nigh daylight before we get back. But I reckon you're right, and I'll go as quick as I can saddle a horse."

"No use," said a Voice. "All the doctors and medicines in the world won't cure her. But if you want one, I'll get him, and get him a lot quicker than you can."

The doctor got there just as the old eight-day clock struck one. "I heard somebody hollering at my window about midnight, telling me to come out here right away. When I got to the door, nobody was there; but I thought I'd better come anyway." He was a young doctor just starting out. "Say, what kind of road overseer and gang do you fellows have out this way? Last time I came over this road, about Christmas, it was the worst I ever saw. Why, I picked up a Stetson hat in the middle of a mud-hole near the four-mile board, and by George there was a man under it. 'You're in the middle of a bad fix, old man,' I said. 'Hell,' he said, 'that ain't nothin' to the fix this mule's in under me.' I had to lift up my feet half the way to keep them from dragging in the mud by the horse's belly. But to-night my horse skimmed over it in an hour. Well, who's sick out here?"

"It's her mind and nerves," he told them after he had questioned them and examined Mary. "I won't conceal from you, she's in pretty bad shape. And medicine won't do her any good. You've just got to be gentle and careful with her. Humor her and be patient with her. I'll give her something to put her to sleep when she gets like this. Watch her close and don't let her get lonesome. She's young and strong and ought to come round in time."

But she never did. For a month she lay there on the bed, looking at nothing and yet straining to see something. Something too far off. At night her pa and ma took turns sitting up. They didn't want the neighbors in. They called the doctor back a few times, but he shook his head and said he couldn't do any more. So they would watch and wait, wanting to do something, but helpless.

One night her ma was sitting there, holding Mary's hand and stroking the dark hair back from her forehead. Suddenly Mary pushed her mother away and sat up and looked across the foot of the bed, as if somebody was standing there.

"Mamma," she whispered, "Mamma . . . I see him . . . at last. . . . And I think . . . I think . . . I'm going . . . to love him."

And she died with the only expression of happiness they had seen on her face in months.

Some folks have tried to explain Mary's strange death. A few say the Witch tortured her continually and kept her in such constant terror that her mind was affected. Others have heard that a school teacher ventriloquist that was jealous of Gardner played tricks on her and the family, and then when she wouldn't have him tormented and frightened her to death. Some believe she was in love with the overseer from the first, and then when he was killed she was in love with the Witch and didn't want to live because she knew she would never be happy with him until she too became a ghost.

But she died, just the same. And they say that on the day of the funeral, when the coffin was carried from the house to a wagon a great black bird flew down from the sky and hung in the air just above the wagon. And around its neck was a bell that tolled in the mournfullest tone ever heard by the ear of man. And when the funeral procession began to move, the great bird floated just in front of it all the way to the graveyard and circled round and round the grave during the burial, the bell tolling all the while. And when the mound was rounded up, the bird swung high up in the air and flew away to the west and finally became just a little speck above the treetops and disappeared. But long after it was gone the mourning notes of the bell floated back to those who stood and watched.

## The Witch-Woman and the Spinning Wheel

One time dey wuz a man whar rid up at night ter a cabin in de eedge o' de swamp. He wuz dat hongry an' ti'd dat he say ter hissef: "Ef I kin git a hunk o' co'n-pone and a slice o' bakin', I doan kur what I pays!" On dat here come a yaller-'ooman spankin' out'n de cabin. She wuz spry on her foot ez a catbird, an' her eyes wuz sof' an' shiny. She ax de man fer ter light an' come in de cabin, an' git some supper. An' Lawd! how he mouf do water when he cotch a glimpst er de skillet on de coals! He luk it so well dat he stay; an' he sot eroun' in dat cabin ontwel he git so fat dat de grease fa'r run out'n he jaws when he look up at de sun. De yaller-'ooman she spen' her time cookin' fer him, an' waitin' on him wi' so much oberly, dat at las' de man, he up an' marry dat yaller-'ooman.

At fus' dey git erlong tollable well, but a'ter erwhile he gin ter notice dat sump'n curus 'bout dat yaller-'ooman. She ain' never in de cabin when he wake up in de night time! So, he mek up his min' fer ter spy on her. He lay down one night on de fo' pos' bed in de cornder, 'ten luk

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By Mrs. M. E. M. Davis, New Orleans, La. From *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XVIII (July-September, 1905), No. LXX, pp. 251-252. Copyright, 1905, by the American Folk-Lore Society. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

he sleep. De yaller-'ooman watch him out'n de een o' her eye, an' when she hear him gin a sno' (caze *cose* he 'ten luk he sno') she jump up an' pat a juba in de middle o' de flo'. Den she reach down a big gridi'on fum de wall, an' rake out some coals, an' haul de big spinnin'-wheel close ter de ha'th. Den, she sot herself down on dat gridi'on, an' soon ez it wuz red-hot she 'gin ter spin her skin off'n her body on de spinnin'-wheel. "Tu'n an' spin, come off skin, tu'n an' spin, come off skin." An' fo' de Lawd, de skin come off'n dat witch-'ooman's body, berginning at de top o' her head, ez slick es de shush come off de ear o' corn. An' when it wuz fa'r off, dan she wuz a gret big yaller cat. Den, she tuk her skin an' chuck it onder de bed. "Lay dar, skin," she say, "wi' dat fool nigger sno'in' in de bed, ontwel I come back. I gwine ter ha' some fum, I is."

Wi' dat she jump out'n de winder an' lope off. Soon ez she wuz gone de man, he jump out'n de bed an' tuk out skin an' fill it plum full o' salt an' pepper, un' th'ow it back onder de bed. Den he crope out an' watch thro' de key-hole ontwel de witch-'ooman come home. She laugh whilse she wuz rakin' out de skin fum onder de bed, an' shakin' herse'f inter it. But when she feel de salt an' pepper, she laugh on de yether side her mouf. She moan an' groan so you kin hear her a mile! But she ain' able ter git out'n dat skin, an' de man watch her thoo de key-hole twel she fall down an' die on de flo'.

## High Walker and Bloody Bones

This wuz uh man. His name wuz High Walker. He walked into a boneyard with skull heads and other bones. So he would call them, "Rise up bloody bones and shake yo'self." And de bones would rise up and come together,

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From *Mules and Men*, by Zora Neale Hurston, pp. 219-220. Copyright, 1935, by Zora Neale Hurston. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company.

and shake theirselves and part and lay back down. Then he would say to hisself, "High Walker," and de bones would say, "Be walkin'."

When he'd git off a little way he'd look back over his shoulder and shake hisself and say, "High Walker and bloody bones," and de bones would shake theirselves. Therefore he knowed he had power.

So uh man sold hisself to de high chief devil. He give 'im his whole soul and body tuh do ez he pleased wid it. He went out in uh drift uh woods and laid down flat on his back beyond all dese skull heads and bloody bones and said, "Go 'way Lawd, and come here Devil and do as you please wid me. Cause Ah want tuh do everything in de world dats wrong and never do nothing right."

And he dried up and died away on doin' wrong. His meat all left his bones and de bones all wuz separated.

And at dat time High Walker walked upon his skull head and kicked and kicked it on ahead of him a many and a many times and said tuh it, "Rise up and shake yo'self. High Walker is here."

Ole skull head wouldn't say nothin'. He looked back over his shoulder cause he heard some noises behind him and said, "Bloody bones you won't say nothin' yet. Rise tuh de power in de flesh."

Den de skull head said, "My mouf brought me here and if you don't mind, your'n will bring you here."

High Walker went on back to his white folks and told de white man dat a dry skull head wuz talkin' in de drift today. White man say he didn't believe it.

"Well, if you don't believe it, come go wid me and Ah'll prove it. And if it don't speak, you kin chop mah head off right where it at."

So de white man and High Walker went back in de drift tuh find dis ole skull head. So when he walked up tuh it, he begin tuh kick and kick de ole skull head, but it wouldn't say nothin'. High Walker looked at de white man and seen 'im whettin' his knife. Whettin' it hard and de sound of it said rick-de-rick, rick-de-rick! So High Walker kicked and kicked dat ole skull head and called it many and many uh time, but it never said nothin'. So de white man cut off High Walker's head.

And de ole dry skull head said, "See dat now! Ah told you dat mouf brought me here and if you didn't mind out it'd bring you here."

So de bloody bones riz up and shook they selves seben times and de white man got skeered and said, "What you mean by dis?"

De bloody bones say, "We got High Walker and we all bloody bones now in de drift together."

## Jack-O-My Lantern

Once dey wuz a man name Jack. He wuz a mighty weeked man, an' treat his wife an' chil'en like a dawg. He didn' do nuthin' but drink from mawnin' tell night, an' twarn' no use to say nuthin' 'tall to 'im 'cause he wuz jus' es ambitious es a mad dawg. Well suh, he drink an' he drink tell whiskey couldn' mek 'im drunk; but et las' hit bu'n 'im up inside, an' den de Debble come fur 'im. When Jack see de Debble, he wuz so skeart he leetle mo'n er drapt in de flo'. Den he bague de Debble to let 'im off jes' a leetle while, but de Debble say:

"Naw, Jack, I ain' gwine wait no longer; my wife, Abbie Sheens, is speckin' yo'." So de Debble start off pretty bris' an' Jack wuz bleeged to foller tell dey come to a grog shop. "Mr. Debble," said Jack, "don' yo' wan' a drink?" "Well," said de Debble, "I b'leeve I does, but ain' got no small change; we don' keep no change down dyah." "Tell you

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From *Folk-Lore from Maryland,* collected by Annie Weston Whitney and Caroline Canfield Bullock, Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, Volume XVIII, 1925, pp. 181-183. New York.

wotcher do, Mr. Debble," said Jack, "I got one ten cent en my pocket; yo' change yo' sef inter 'nurr ten cent, and we kin git two drinks, and den yo' kin change yo' sef back again." So de Debble change hisse'f inter a ten cent, and Jack pick 'im put, but 'stid o' gwine de grog shop, Jack clap de ten cent inter he pocket-book dat he hadn't took outen he pocket befo', 'cause he didn' wan' de Debble to see dat de ketch wuz in de shape ob a cross. He shet it tight, an' dyah he had de Debble, an' twarn' no use for 'im to struggle, 'cause he couldn' git by dat cross. Well suh; fus he swar and threat'n Jack wid wat he wuz going to do to 'im and den he begun to bague, but Jack jes' ta'n round an' start to go home. Den de Debble say:

"Jack, ef yo'll lemme out o' hyah, I'll let yo' off fur a whole year. I will, fur trufe. Lemme go, Jack, 'cause Abbie Sheens is too lazy to put the bresh on de fire, an' hit'll all go black out ef I ain' dyah fo' long ten' to it."

Den Jack say ter hisse'f, "I gret min' to let 'im go, 'cause in a whole year, I kin 'pent and git 'ligion, an' git shet in 'im dat er way."

Den he say, "Mr. Debble, I'll letcher out ef yo' 'clar fo' gracious yo' won't come after me fur tweel month."

Den de Debble promise befo' Jack undo de clasp, an' by de time Jack got the pocket-book open he wuz gone. Den Jack say to hisse'f, "Well, now I gwine to 'pent and git 'ligion sho'; but 'haint no use bein' in no hurry; de las' six mont' will be plenty o' time. Whar dat ten cent? Hyah it is. I gwine git me a drink." When de six mont' was gone, Jack 'lowed one mont' would be time 'nuff to 'pent, and when de las' mont' come, Jack 'lowed he gwine hab one mo' spree, and den he would have a week or ten days lef', and dat was plenty of time, 'cause 'e done hearn o' folks 'penting on dey death bade. Den he went on a spree for sho', and when de las' week come, Jack had 'lirium trimblins, and de fus' ting he knowed, dyah wuz de Debble at de do', and Jack had to git outen he bade and go 'long wid 'im. After a while dey pass a tree full o' gret big apples.

"Don' yo' want some apples, Mr. Debble?" said Jack.

"Yo' kin git some ef you' wan' 'em," said de Debble and he stop and look up in de tree.

"How yo' 'spec' a man wid 'lirium trimblins to climb a tree?" said Jack. "Yo' catch hol' de bough, an' I'll push yer up in de crotch, an' den yo' kin git all yo' wants."

So Jack push 'im in de crotch, an' de Debble 'gin to feel de apples to git a meller one. While he wuz doin' dat, Jack, he whip he knife outen he pocket, an' cut a cross in de bark ob de tree jes' under de Debble, and de Debble holler, "Tzip! Sumpi' nurr heet me den. Wotcher doin' down dyah, Jack? I gwine cut yo' heart out."

But he couldn' git down while dat cross wuz dyah, an' Jack jes' sat down on de grass, an' watch 'im ragin' an' swarin' an' cussin'. Jack keep 'im dyah all night, tell 'twuz gret big day, an' de Debble change he chune an' he say:

"Jack, lemme git down hyah an' I'll gib yo' nurr year."

"Gimme nuttin'," said Jack, an' he stretch hisse'f out on de grass. After a while, 'bout sun up, de Debble say:

"Jack, cut dis ting offen hyah, an' lemme git down, an' I'll gib yo' ten year."

"Naw, surre," said Jack, "I won' letcher git down less yo' 'clar fo' gracious dat yo' won' never come arfter me no mo'."

When de Debble fin' Jack wuz es hard as rock, he 'greed, an' 'clared fo' gracious dat he wouldn' never come fur Jack agin, an' Jack cut de cross offen the tree, an' de Debble lef' widout a word. Arfter dat Jack never thought no mo' 'bout 'pentin', 'cause he warn' feared ob de Debble, an' he didn' wan' to go whar dey warn' no whiskey. Den he lib on tell he body war out, an he wuz bleeged to die. Fus' he went to de gate o' heaven but de angel jes' shake he hade. Den he went to de gate o' hell, but when it would come dat Jack wuz dyah, de Debble holler to de imps:

"Shet de do' an' don' let dat man come in hyah; he done treat me scan'lous. Tell 'im to go long back whar he come from."

Den Jack say:

"How I gwine fine my way back in de dark? Gimme a lantern."

Den de Debble tek a chunk outen de fire, an' say, "Hyah, tek dis, an' dontcher nuver come back hyah no mo'."

## Samson and Satan

Satan said to Samson, "They tell me that you are the strongest man in the world." Samson says, "Yes, I s'pose I am. Let us to-day try our strength." Satan said to Samson, "I will fus' try de hammer dat knock upon anvil." Samson says to Satan, "T'row dat hammer up, see how high you can t'row it." He t'rowed it seventy-five miles. Samson says, "Why, Satan, have you another hammer?" He says, "Why, yes!" He says, "What's the name of that hammer?"—"De one dat we wel's ahn (weld iron) with." He says, "How high can you t'row dat one?"—"Oh," he says, " 'bout a hundred miles."—"Oh," he says, "you can't t'row at all. I t'ought you was a man." He says, "Now, Satan, you stan' back! you ahn't a man at all." Samson steps an' takes up de anvil an' looks up ter de skies, an' said, "Michael an' Rafeel an' all de holy angils," he says, "stan' back, because here comes de anvil!" An' when he swing de anvil twice, Satan said to Samson, he said, "Don' do that! Save heaven an' de hos'." He said, "If you knock 'em outer existence, what shall we do fe livin'?"

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From "Folk-Tales Collected at Miami, Fla.," by Elsie Clews Parsons, *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXX (April-June, 1917), No. CXVI, p. 223. Copyright, 1917, by the American Folk-Lore Society. New York.

## The Devil Marriage

One time a lady said she was never goin' to marry a man unless he was dressed in gol'. Her father had a party,[1] en a man came dressed in gol'. Somebody at the gate. Man's son ran out, car'ed him to where the ol' people were. "Look as if you was havin' some to do here."—"Yes," said the man of the house, "you better go an' take part with them." Man's daughter took man dressed in gol' for her partner. Little boy about twelve noticed him, en said, "Sister, don't you notice his feet?"—"What's wrong? Why, no!"—"Why, sister, they ain't nothin' but nubbed.[2] Notice them when he get playin'. You ask moder what's the matter wi' his feet."—"Frien', what's de matter wi' your feet?"—"I fell in the fire when I was a little feller like you, en my feet got burned off." Now his hand burned too. He said he fell in the soap-pot when he was a small boy.[3] He fixed to be married. Dat night said he mus' go home. He kyar'ed dat man's daughter back with him. She says, "You let brother go with me. I'm goin' to a strange place. I like to have some of my people goin' with me." Little boy says, "Sister, don't you notice how he done? When he got up in his buggy, he throw out an aigg. He say, 'Hop en skip. Betty, go 'long.' " Betty des flew. He went until he came to where was a great big smoke. Girl said, "Mister, what sort of a big smoke? I can't go

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From "Tales from Guilford County, North Carolina," by Elsie Clews Parsons, *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXX (April-June, 1917), No. CXVI, pp. 181-183. Copyright, 1917, by the American Folk-Lore Society. New York.

Informant, Carter Young. About 70. Father of Lulu, Nancy, and Katherine Young. Born in Guilford County; but he has lived in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi. Heard by my informant at Macon, Ga. Compare Jones, XXXIV; MAFLS 2: 69; Parsons, XXIII; Pub. Folk-Lore Soc. 55:XXXIV, L.—E. C. P.

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[1] *Variant:* Her father, the king, gave a big dance. This variant and the following were told me by Young's daughter Katherine, who had heard the tale only from her father.—E. C. P.

[2] *Variant:* Clubbed.—E. C. P.

[3] *Variant:* His father was making a plant-bed, and he ran through. His mother was making a pot o' lye, and he grabbed in it.—E. C. P.

through dat smoke."—"Oh, dat my han's burnin' off new groun'. I go en lay that smoke."—"Sister, don't you take notice what he said. 'Hop, skip, Betty,' 'till we come to this smoke. He stop Betty, he lay this smoke. Is you willin' to go back home with me, sister? That ain't nothin' in de worl' but the Devil." Brother threw out an aigg, en said, "Wheel, Betty!" En Betty wheel. "Betty, go 'long! Hop en skip!" En Betty flew back home to her father. En behol'! next mornin' what should we see but the Devil comin'.[1] He went up to de gate. He says[2]—

"Enbody here?
Enbody here?
Name Ma'y Brown
Genral Cling town."[3]

Ol' witch[4] says—

"Somebody here,
Somebody here.
Name Ma'y Brown
Genral Cling town.

"What is whiter,
What is whiter,
Than any sheep's down
In Genral Cling town?

"Snow is whiter,
Snow is whiter,
Than any sheep's down
In Genral Cling town.

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[1] Ol' Betty turned an' went back to her master. That man know that Betty turn up to dat lady's house an' car'ed her home. He gettin' in his cheriot an' come back as hard as he could.—E. C. P.

[2] Young chanted the following. Obviously he had originally heard it sung.—E. C. P.

[3] That was hell.—E. C. P.

[4] *Variant:* The lady brother went an' got an ol' woman who could answer that ol' man's questions. If that ol' woman couldn't have answered one of them questions, she'd [he'd] have got that girl.—E. C. P.

"What is greener,
What is greener,
Than any wheat growed
In Genral Cling town?

"Grass is greener,
Grass is greener,
Than any wheat growed
In Genral Cling town.

"What is bluer,
What is bluer,
Than anything down
In Genral Cling town?

"The sky is bluer,
The sky is bluer,
Than anything down
In Genral Cling town.

"What is louder,
What is louder,
Than any horns down
In Genral Cling town?

"Thunder is louder,
Thunder is louder,
Than any horns down
In General Cling town."[1]

Ol' Bad Man (ol' Scratch) said he won her soul. Ol' witch taken sole off shoe en throw at him. He jumped at it en took it down.[2]

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[1] Compare **JAFL 12:129, 130.—E. C. P. Also "Riddles Wisely Expounde** (Child, No. 1).

[2] *Variant:* **He said, "Skip er light, Betty, an' go 'long."—E. C. P.**

# *Part Four*

# Every One Played, Every One Sang

*There were games that every one played; and*
*when there was music, every one sang.*
*—M. L. Wilson*

## I

## Sidewalk Rhymes and Play-Party Songs

## II

## Ballads and Songs

# I. Sidewalk Rhymes and Play-Party Songs

*To "sing a dance" and "dance a song" were identical expressions.*
*—W. W. Newell*

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## Introduction

### HERE WE GO ROUND

The identity or similarity of children's games through the years and the world over testifies to the unity and continuity of culture, in spite of all the vicissitudes and vagaries of time and change and corrupting oral tradition. Games also throw light on the history of folklore and popular customs. From "playing at work" to "love histories," singing games are essentially folk dramas, in which a situation is acted out with imitative gesture and action. They are also rituals, in the pure sense of singing for joy instead of the functional sense of singing for power—perhaps the purest survival, in modern society, of "language as incantation," of "verse as dance and gesture and worship" (the worship belonging to the religion of play).

Nothing short of magic—the same magic of runic formula, cadence, melody, rhyme, refrain, doggerel, and nonsense that accounts for their origin—will serve to explain the peculiar, hypnotic hold that play rhymes and game songs exert on our memory and imagination. As a closely knit fraternity, unified by age and the "fiercely isolating emotional experiences" of childhood, children are a true folk group; and the oral, communal tradition of play is as close to the "bookless world" as most moderns ever get.

When Boston youngsters took off their shoes and stockings and waded in the gutter after a rain, they chanted shrill defiance of parental authority:

Pa-a-addle in the wah-tuh!
Mother told me not tuh!

Thus they announced the self-sufficiency of play as something done for its own sake and providing, like religion and poetry, another world to live in. But for all the separation of the kingdom of play from the kingdoms of duty and necessity, children's lore is inseparable from the rest of lore and the rest of culture. And more clearly and truly than most lore, which has become mixed with life and literature, games throw light on some of the fundamental aspects of folklore. Besides indicating the origins of myth and drama in ritual, they point to the "communal" improvisation of simple movement songs, accompanying, directing, and suggesting rhythmic motion, in a singing, dancing group, composed of leader and chorus. Many rhymes and games are said to contain survivals of ancient rites and superstitions—foundation sacrifice ("London Bridge"), well worship ("Sally Walker"), funeral ceremonies ("Green Gravel"), child stealing ("Old Witch"), incantations and charms ("Rain, rain, go away"; "Snail, snail, come out of your hole"; "Lady bug, lady bug, fly away home"). Without going all the way back to a bygone stage of culture, dance games may be traced to rounds, reels, and carols once popular among adults, and "sunken" in the "downward process" of tradition. Further traces of "high descent and gradual deterioration" as well as of ballad affiliations are seen in ballad phrases like "my fair lady" and "Take her by the lily-white hand" and in occasional examples of the game or dance use of ballads like "The Maid Freed from the Gallows" and "The Two Sisters."

## EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

Children's play rhymes and game songs are thus a mingling of the very old and the very new. In the process of Americanization British singing games have undergone such democratic changes or losses of meaning as the substitution of "ducks" for "dukes" in the courtship game, "Here Comes Three Dukes A-Roving" and of "In the royal race he run" for "And from the royal race he sprung" in the kissing game, "King William was King James' Son." Alongside of and analogous to the political allusions in Mother Goose rhymes, New York City counting-out, ball-bouncing, and rope-skipping rhymes and other doggerels contain topical and local allusions, to war and depression, movies and comics, among other things, reflecting the activities, interests, prejudices, and social conditions of the group.

[One, two, three, four.]
Charlie Chaplin went to war.
When the war [*sic*] began to fight,
Charlie Chaplin said, "Good night."

Hip! Hip!
The Kaiser's got the grip.
Why? Why?
Because he's gonna die.
When? When?
At half-past ten.
Where? Where?
In the electric chair.

Eeny meeny Mussolini,
Hit him on the bumble beany.

God made a river,
God made a lake
But when God made Hitler
He made a big mistake.

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Catch a Jap by the toe.
If he hollers, make him say:
"I surrender, U.S.A."

Hailie Selassie was a kind old man,
He lit the match to the frying pan.
When all the people tasted the beef,
They all trucked off to the home relief.

Left! Left! I had a good job and I left!
First they hired me, then they fired me,
Then by golly I left!
Left! left a wife and fourteen kids,
Right! Right! right on the kitchen floor.

Take a local,
Take an express.
Don't get off
Till you reach success.

Betty Boop
Fell in the soup.
When she came out,
She said, "Boop-e-dee-doop."

One, two, three,
Keep the stars a-going:
Garbo, Dietrich, Shearer,
Cooper, Benny, Mix, Muni, etc.[1]

## GRASSROOTS MINSTRELS

The play-party developed out of the singing game by way of the square dance. The name is applied both to the gathering, still popular in the rural South and West, and to the games played, many of which are gradually passing into school and playground usage. As a result of church prejudice against dancing, "devil's ditties," and the devil's instrument, the fiddle, as well as in the absence of music and other facilities for dancing, rural youngsters evolved an alternative form, which is a compromise between the square dance and the singing game. For dramatic devices for choosing and stealing partners, the players went to courtship and marriage games. For dance figures, tunes, and calls, they went to the square dance. For additional tunes and texts, they went to popular comic and sentimental songs, especially minstrel songs, and to other folk songs, including an occasional hymn or ballad.

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[1] The foregoing rhymes are from the Manuscripts of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in New York City.

The typical play-party game is a "swinging play," in which the players swing one another by the hand instead of by the waist, to the accompaniment of their own singing. Thus, at one stroke, the play-party does away with the need of musicians, caller, and floor manager and avoids complete ostracism by the church. Yet, competing with the square dance, it comes more and more under dance influence and represents a reversion of the singing game to its original adult level. The simple repetitions of a game formula are supplemented and gradually displaced by the progressive movements of the square dance. These include (as in "Old Joe Clark") the "right and left," in which each boy swings his partner by the right hand, then the next girl by the left hand, and so on until he gets back to his partner, and (as in "Old Brass Wagon") the longways dance, in which the leader and his partner "lead through" or go up and down between the facing rows of boys and girls, swinging first each other, then the next girl and boy in line, each other again, and so on until all have been swung and every couple has had its turn at leading. Other favorites are the "weaving" movements of the Virginia reel (as in "Weevily Wheat") and the closing promenade, in which the couples, one behind another, cross hands and march around the room.

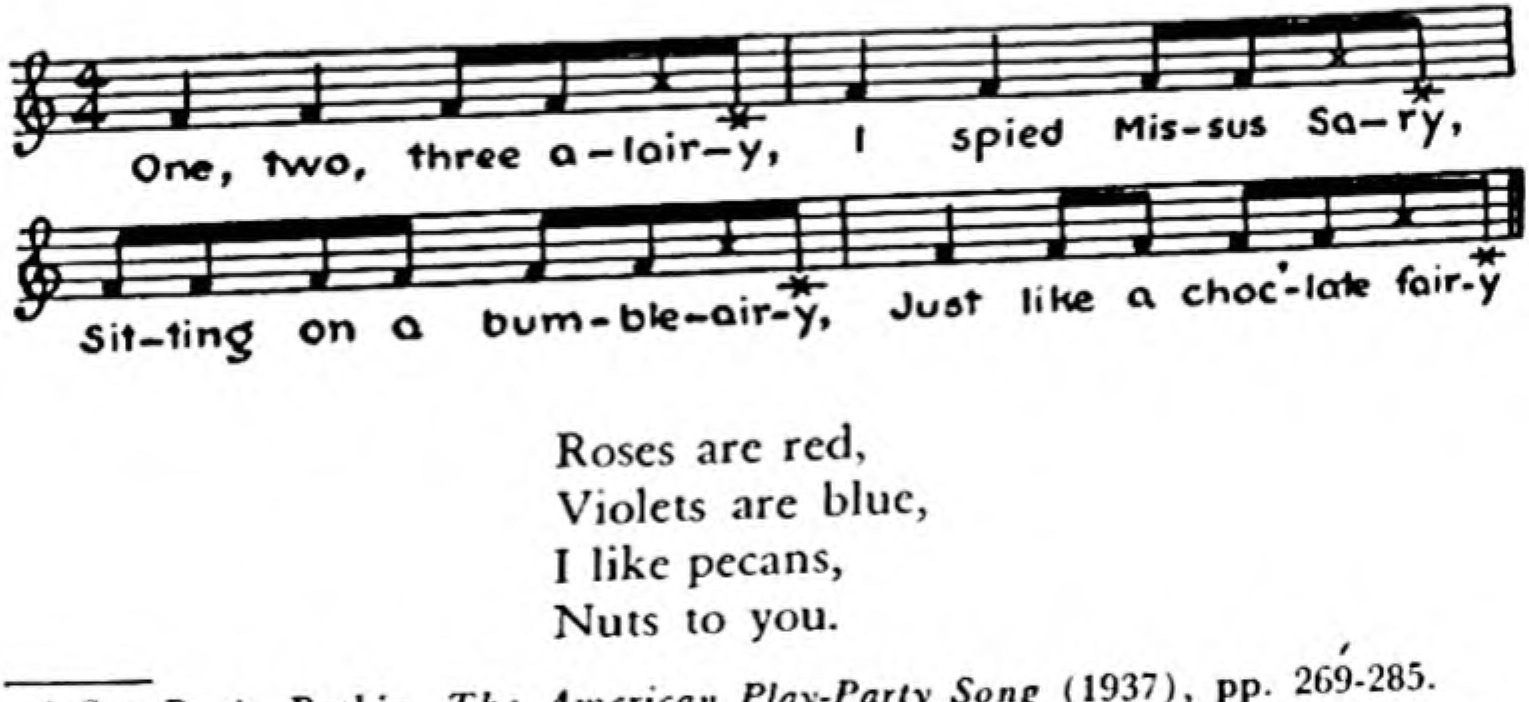
Under the "wearing usage" of the dance, and in the absence of a game formula, the songs become fragmentary and unstable, with much crossing of texts and tunes and shifting of individual lines and stanzas. The most characteristic play-party songs consist of an elastic series of directions resembling dance calls, bound together by a refrain, word, line, or stanza. For example, "Jutang": "Circle four in Jutang a Jutang ju," "Work right and left in Jutang a Jutang ju," "Once and a half," etc., "On down the line to the next pretty girl," etc., "Next young lady to your right," etc., "On down the line," etc., "Meet your partner," etc., "All night long," etc., repeating for "Circle six," etc., up to ten and twelve. Sometimes the rigmarole is reinforced by a dramatic allusion, as in "Old Brass Wagon," in which the successive swinging of players by the lead couple is described as "One wheel off and the axle draggin," "Two wheels off the old brass wagon." Movements and circumstances of the game are often alluded to in satirical comments and in interpolated phrases and lines to fill in the intervals and entertain the players.

As the rural equivalent of topical and local allusions in sidewalk rhymes, these nonsense and patter lines (resembling dance-call couplets) and the songs themselves abound in realistic and humorous allusions to rural and pioneer life. The players identify themselves with familiar flora and fauna, objects and characters. With compliments for the girls and satire for the boys, they are pretty little pinks, apples, peaches, bird in the cage, redbird, bluebird, sugar and tea, candy, sugar lump, cinnamon, hogs in the cornfield, cows in the clover, pig in the parlor, cat in the cream jug, cow in the kitchen, soapstick, hobo, old bums, etc. Introducing real places and activities, at first or second hand, into their imaginary journeys and exploits, they are marching down to Old Quebec or New Orleans where the drums are loudly beating, coming through the wilderness, the canebrake, the bushes, the timber, down in or bound for Alabama, Mississippi River . . . bound to cross, rallying round the canebrake to shoot the buffalo, going to Texas two by two, raisin' sweet taters in a sandy land, going back to Tennessee, wishing they were in Arkansas, going down to Rowser's to get some lager beer, leading her up and down the valley on that good old cider wine, losing her on that raging canal.

One of the largest collections of allusive stanzas, many of them interchangeable with other play-party songs, such as "Cindy" and "Liza Jane," has been attracted to "Old Joe Clark," forming a vigorously and fabulously comic epic of cards, chickens, courting, chain-gang chains, coons, coon dogs, and other critters.[1]

—B. A. B.

## Sidewalk Rhymes


One, two, three a-lair-y, I spied Mis-sus Sa-ry,
Sit-ting on a bum-ble-air-y, Just like a choc'-late fair-y

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
I like pecans,
Nuts to you.

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[1] See B A. Botkin, *The American Play-Party Song* (1937), pp. 269-285.

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From "Songs of Innocence," by Dorothy Mills and Morris Bishop, *The New Yorker*, Vol. XIII (November 13, 1937), No. 39, pp. 32-42. Copyright, 1937, by the F-R Publishing Corporation. New York City. Tunes transcribed by Charles Seeger.

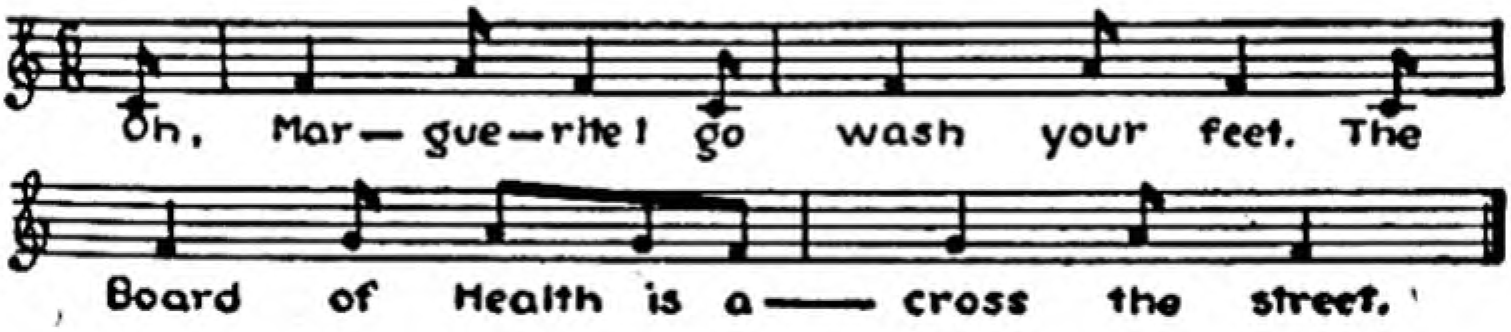
Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Elephants are fat
And so are you.

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
If I had your mug,
I'd join the zoo.

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Everybody stinks
And so do you.

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
I use Lifebuoy,
Why don't you?

Looie, pooie,
You're full of hooey.


Oh, Mar-gue-rite! go wash your feet. The
Board of Health is a-cross the street.

Marguerite,
Go wash your feet;
The Board of Health
Is 'cross the street.

Eight and eight are sixteen,
Stick your nose in kerosene,
Wipe it off with ice cream.

Tonight, tonight,
The pillow fight,

Tomorrow's the end of school;
Break the dishes, break the chairs,
Trip the teachers on the stairs.

Bouncy, bouncy ballie,
I lost the leg of my dollie;
My mother came out
And gave me a clout
That turned my petticoat
Inside out.

My mother, your mother, hanging out the clothes,
My mother gave your mother a punch in the nose.
What color did it turn?
Red, yellow, blue, green, violet, orange, etc.

Your mother, my mother, live across the way;
Every night they have a fight,
And this is what they say:
"Your old man is a dirty old man,
'Cause he washes his face in the frying pan,
He combs his hair
With the leg of a chair;
Your old man is a dirty old man."

I should worry, I should care,
I should marry a millionaire;
He should die, I should cry,
I should marry another guy.

I had a little brother,
His name was Tiny Tim;
I put him in the bathtub
To teach him how to swim.
He drank up all the water,
He ate up all the soap;
He died last night
With a bubble in his throat.

Mother, Mother, I am sick;
Send for the doctor, quick, quick, quick.
Doctor, Doctor, shall I die?
Yes, my darling, do not cry.
How many coaches shall I have?
Ten, twenty, thirty, etc.
*(Till the skipper misses.)*

Teddy on the railroad,
Picking up stones;
Along came an engine
And broke Teddy's bones.
"Oh," said Teddy,
"That's no fair!"
"Oh," said the engineer,
"I don't care."

Silence in the courtroom!
The judge wants to spit.

Mother, Mother, Mother, pin a rose on me.
Two little girls [or boys] are after me;
One is blind and the other can't see;
Mother, Mother, Mother, pin a rose on me.

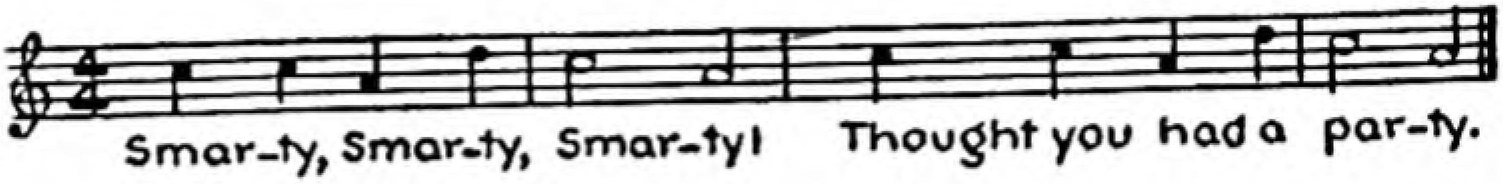
Bless the meat,
Damn the skin,
Open your mouth
And cram it in.

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Lead me to the sugar bowl.
If the sugar bowl is empty,
Lead me to my mamma's pantry.

Up the river,
Down the lake;
The teacher's got
The bellyache.

Hot roasted peanuts,
Tell the teacher she's nuts;
If she asks you what's your name,
Tell the teacher she's a pain.

Up the ladder,
Down the tree,
You're a bigger
Fool than me.



* * * * *

Mary's mad,
And I am glad,
And I know what will please her:
A bottle of wine
To make her shine,
And a sweet little boy to squeeze her.

* * * * *

I went down to Grandpa's farm,
The billygoat chased me all around the barn,
Chased me up in the sycamore tree,
And this is the song he sang to me:
"I love coffee, I love tea,
I love the boys and the boys love me."

If you don't like my apples,
Then don't shake my tree;
I'm not after your boy friend,
He's after me.

Life is short,
Death will come;
Go it, Ruth,
While you're young.

When you get married,
And your husband gets cross,
Just pick up the broom
And ask who's boss.

May your life be strewn with roses,
And your children have pug noses.

First comes love,
Then comes marriage;
Then comes Edith
With a baby carriage.

Buck, buck, you lousy muck,
How many fists have I got up,
One, two, or none?

Inty minty tibblety fig,
Deema dima doma nig,
Howchy powchy domi nowchy,
Hom tom tout,
Olligo bolliga boo,
Out goes YOU.

One-ery two-ery ickery Ann,
Fillicy fallacy Nicholas John,
Queever quaver Irish Mary,
Stinclum stanclum buck.

Ibbety bibbety gibbety goat,
Ibbety bibbety canalboat,
Dictionary,
Down the ferry,
Out goes YOU.

Minnie and a minnie and a ha, ha, ha,
Kissed her fellow in a trolley car;
I told Ma, Ma told Pa,
Minnie got a licking and a ha, ha, ha.

I went downtown
To meet Mrs. Brown;
She gave me a nickel
To buy me a pickle;
The pickle was sour,
She gave me a flower;
The flower was dead,
She gave me a thread;
The thread was thin,
She gave me a pin;
The pin was sharp,
She gave me a harp;
The harp began to sing:
Minnie and a minnie and a ha, ha, ha.

Cinderella, dressed in yellow,
Gone downtown to buy an umbrella;
On the way she met her fellow.
How many kisses did she receive?
Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, etc.

Cinderella, dressed in red,
Went downtown to buy some thread.
Along came a fellow whose name was Red,
And shot her with a bullet that was made of lead.

Judge, judge, tell the judge
Mamma has a baby.
It's a boy, full of joy,
Papa's going crazy.
Wrap it up in tissue paper,
Send it down the elevator.
How many pounds did it weigh?
One, two, three, etc.

I won't go to Macy's any more, more, more,
There's a big fat policeman at the door, door, door,
He grab me by the collar and he make me pay a dollar,
So I won't go to Macy's any more, more, more.

Ivory soap,
See it float
Down the river
Like a boat.

Roll, roll, Tootsie Roll,
Roll, marble, in the hole.

Floor to let,
Inquire within;
Lady put out
For drinking gin.
If she promises to drink no more,
Here's the key to her back door.

When Buster Brown was one,
He used to suck his thumb,
Thumb me over, thumb me over,
A, B, C.
When Buster Brown was two,
He used to buckle his shoe,
Shoe me over, shoe me over,
A, B, C, etc.

Happy Hooligan, number nine,
Hung his breeches on the line;
When the line began to swing,
Happy Hooligan began to sing:
"On the mountain stands a lady,
Who she is I do not know;
All she wants is gold and silver,
And a nice young man with whom to go."
Come in, my sister ——,
Go out, my sister ——.

Toots and Casper went to town,
Tootsie bought an evening gown,
Casper bought a pair of shoes,
Buttercup bought the *Daily News*.
How many pages did he read?
Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, etc.

Rin Tin Tin
Swallowed a pin,
He went to the doctor,
And the doctor wasn't in
He went to the nurse,
And she said a curse,
And that was the end
Of Rin Tin Tin.

Rin Tin Tin
Swallowed a pin,
He went to the doctor,
And the doctor wasn't in.
He knocked on the door,
And fell on the floor;
Along came a nurse,
And hit him on the jaw.

Charlie Chaplin sat on a pin;
How many inches did it go in?
One, two, three, etc.

* * * * *

One, two, three, four,
Charlie Chaplin went to war.
He taught the nurses how to dance,
And this is what he taught them:
Heel, toe, over we go,
Heel, toe, over we go;
Salute to the king,
And bow to the queen,
And turn your back
On the Kaiserine.

I scream,
You scream,
We all scream
For ice cream.

Annie bolanny,
Tillie annie, go sanny,
Tee-legged, tie-legged,
Bow-legged Annie.

I asked my mother for fifty cents
To see the elephant jump the fence;
He jumped so high,
He reached the sky,
And never came back till the Fourth of July.

Yellow-belly, yellow-belly, come and take a swim;
Yes, by golly, when the tide comes in.

## Itisket, Itasket (Hunt the Squirrel)

A ring of players is formed, about the outside of which circles a child who carries a knotted handkerchief, with which he finally taps another on the shoulder, and starts to run around the ring. The child touched must pick up the handkerchief, and run in the opposite direction from the first. The two players, when they meet, must curtsey three times. The toucher endeavors to secure the other's place in the ring, failing which, he must begin again. As he goes about the circle, he recites the words:

Hunt the squirrel through the wood,
I lost him, I found him;
I have a little dog at home,
He won't bite you,
He won't bite you,
And he *will* bite you.

*Cambridge, Mass.*

In Philadelphia, a corresponding rhyme begins:

I carried water in my glove,
I sent a letter to my love.

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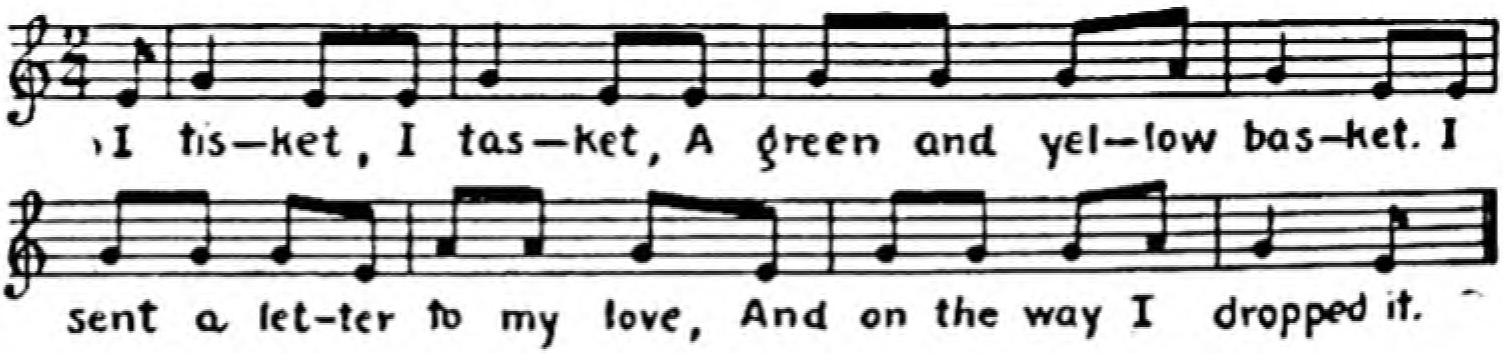
From *Games and Songs of American Children*, collected and compared by William Wells Newell, pp. 168-169. Copyright, 1883, 1903, by Harper & Brothers. New York and London.

A variation from New York:


I tis-ket, I tas-ket, A green and yel-low bas-ket. I
sent a let-ter to my love, And on the way I dropped it.

The name of the game in England is "Drop-glove."

Another and apparently older way of playing "Hunt the Squirrel" is a game in which the child touched follows the toucher until he has caught him, pursuing him both in and out of the ring, being obliged to enter and leave the circle at the same point as the latter.

A kissing-game, in which the player who makes the circuit taps another on the shoulder, and then takes flight, while the person touched is entitled to a kiss if he can capture the fugitive before the latter has made the tour of the circle and gained the vacant place, is a favorite among the "Pennsylvania Dutch," under the name of "Hen-slauch" (Hand-slag), that is, striking with the hand. The game is there called "Ring," and has inspired certain verses of Harbach, the nearest approach to a poet which that unimaginative race has produced.[1]

In a similar game, formerly played in Massachusetts, the leader of the game touches one of the party on the shoulder, and asks, "Have you seen my sheep?" The first replies, "How was it dressed?" The toucher now describes the costume of some player, who, as soon as he recognizes the description of himself, must take flight, and endeavor to regain his place in safety.

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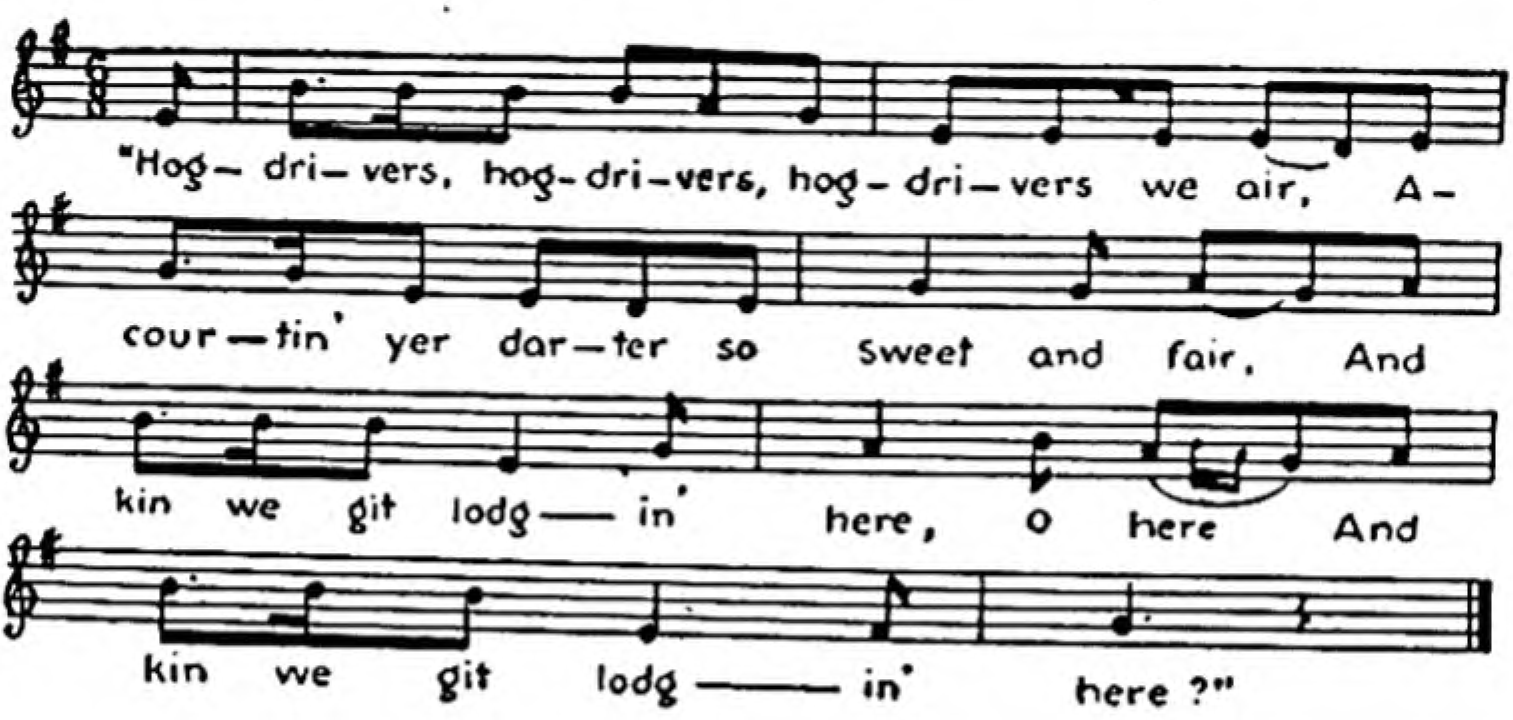
[1] See his "Schulhaus an dem Krik."—W. W. N.

## Hog Drovers (Swine-Herders)


"Hog- dri- vers, hog- dri- vers, hog- dri- vers we air, A-
cour- tin' yer dar- ter so sweet and fair, And
kin we git lodg- in' here, O here And
kin we git lodg- in' here?"

"Hog-drivers, hog-drivers, hog-drivers we air,
A-courtin' yer darter so sweet and fair;
And kin we git lodgin' here, O here—
And kin we git lodgin' here?"

"Now this is my darter that sets by my side,
And no hog-driver can get 'er fer a bride;
And you kain't git lodgin' here, O here—
And you kain't git lodgin' here."

"Yer darter is pretty, yer ugly yerself,
So we'll travel on further and seek better wealth,
And we don't want lodgin' here, O here—
And we don't want lodgin' here."

"Now this is my darter that sets by my side,
And Mr. —— kin git 'er fer a bride,
And he kin git lodgin' here, O here—
And he kin git lodgin' here."

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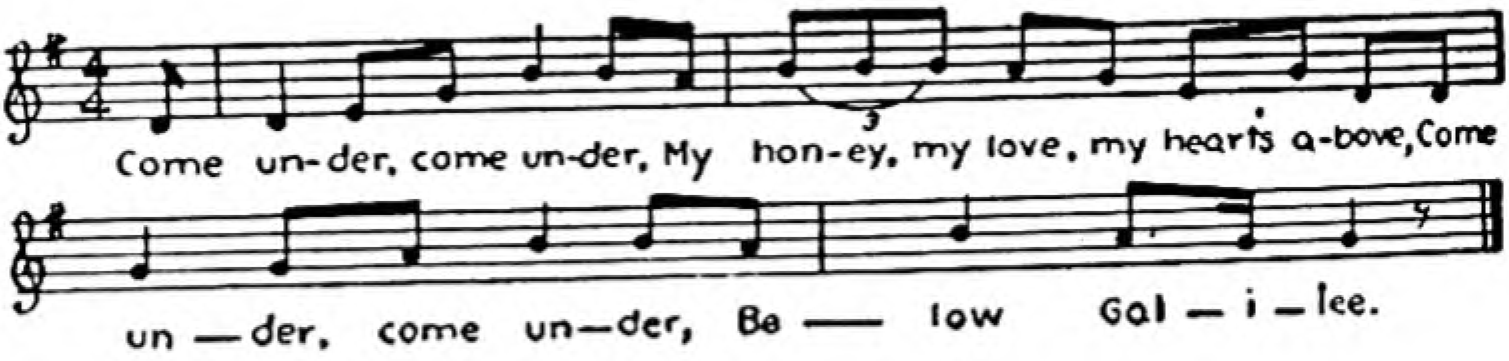
*Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.
In an Oklahoma version of "Hog Drovers" (originally an Irish game played at wakes), cowboys and oil-drillers are among the rejected occupations.


Come un-der, come un-der, My hon-ey, my love, my hearts a-bove, Come
un — der, come un—der, Be — low Gal — i — lee.

Come under, come under,
My honey, my love, my heart's above—
Come under, come under,
Below Galilee.

We've caught you as a prisoner,
My honey, my love, my heart's above—
We've caught you as a prisoner,
Below Galilee.

Then hug 'er neat, and kiss 'er sweet,
My honey, my love, my heart's above—
Then hug 'er nice, and kiss 'er twice,
Below Galilee.

* * * * *

From the communication of the recorder is given the following account of the manner of playing: A man, generally an older man, and a girl sit side by side on two chairs in the middle of a room, so placed as to face in opposite directions; another man and a girl walk around hand in hand, and sing, "Naow this is my darter," etc. The "Hog-drovers" retort with the second verse, after which the father sings the third verse, in which he names as partner of his daughter any man whom the girl selects. The latter and her chosen swain then join hands and withdraw, another girl sits beside the father, and the performance is repeated until all players are paired. Then the last girl and the father stand up, and by joining hands make a bridge; they sing, "Come under," etc., while the other couples pass through. On a second attempt at passage, the first couple is captured by the father and his companion, who sing, "We've caught you as a prisoner," etc. The imprisoned man kisses his partner twice, the two are released, and the game continues with another couple. In the Hickory Gap region, some twenty miles from Asheville, the game is popular with old and young. These mountaineers consider dancing immoral, but gather from far and wide whenever a "fuss" is on foot.

In regard to the music, the recorder remarks that none of the intervals are absolutely correct, and that the impression made on the hearer curiously resembles that caused by songs of North American Indians. The intervals could be accurately reproduced only by a violin, but in singing the effect may be gained by flatting the crossed intervals.

In the mountains the game would be designated as "comic," such appellation being bestowed on any song which cannot be termed "sacred."

*North Carolina Mountains* (near Asheville, N. C.).

## Old Joe Clark

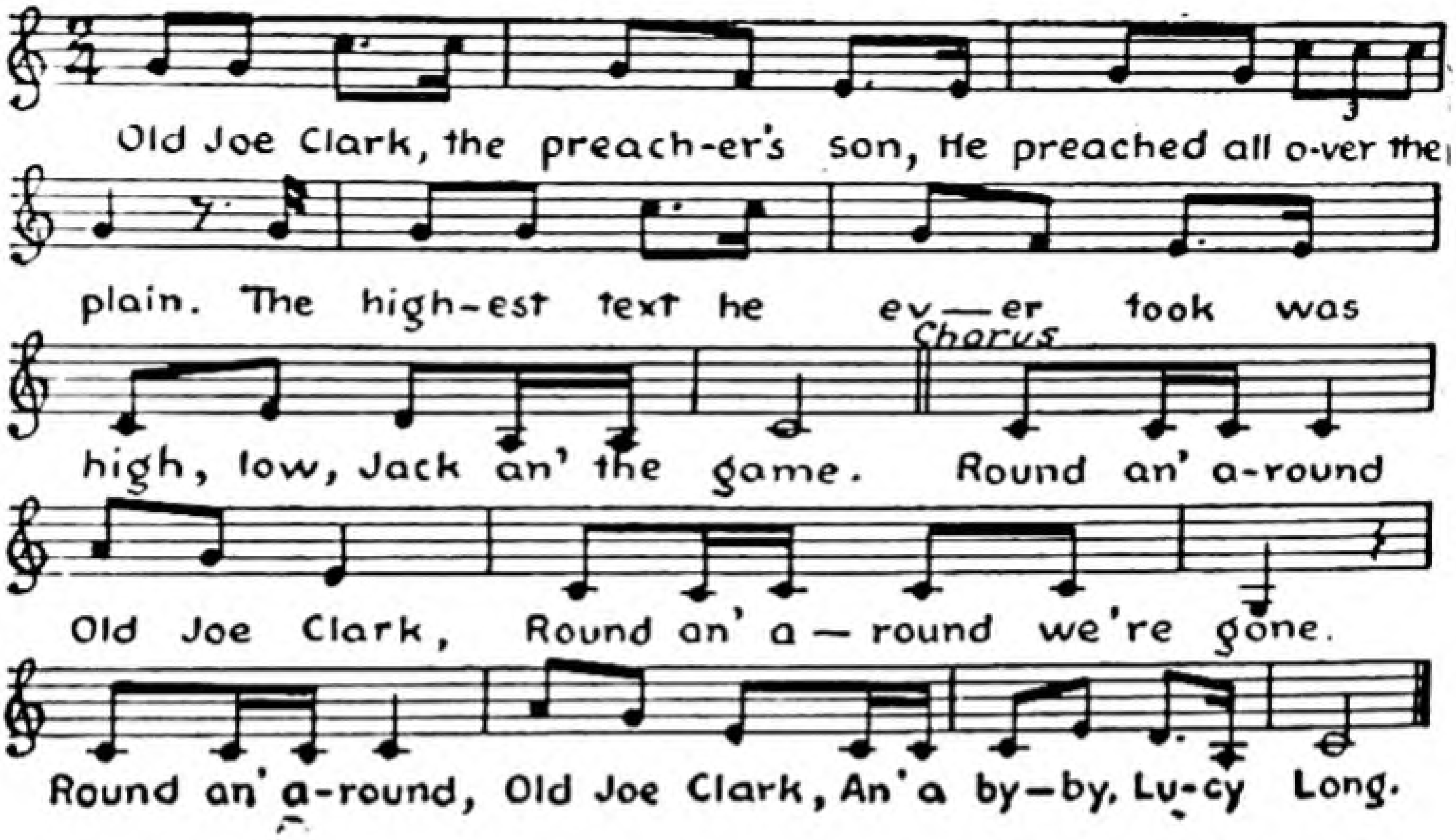
### I[1]

Old Joe Clark, the preacher's son,
  He preached all over the plain.
The highest text he ever took
  Was high, low, Jack an' the game.

---

From *The American Play-Party Song, With a Collection of Oklahoma Texts and Tunes*, by B. A. Botkin, pp. 272-274. Copyright, 1937, by B. A. Botkin. The University Studies of the University of Nebraska, Volume XXXVII, Nos. 1-4. Lincoln, Nebraska.

[1] Sung by Clayton Black, east of Noble, Cleveland County, Oklahoma.


Old Joe Clark, the preach-er's son, He preached all o-ver the plain. The high-est text he ev—er took was high, low, Jack an' the game.
Chorus
Round an' a-round Old Joe Clark, Round an' a—round we're gone. Round an' a-round, Old Joe Clark, An' a by—by, Lu-cy Long.

*Chorus:*
Round an' around, Old Joe Clark,
  Round an' around we're gone.
Round an' around, Old Joe Clark,
  An' a by-by, Lucy Long.

Old Joe Clark he had a dog,
  As blind as he could be.
Ran a redbug round a stump,
  And a coon up a holler tree.

If you see that girl of mine,
  Tell her if you please
Whenever she goes to roll that dough
  To roll up her dirty sleeves.

If you see that girl of mine,
  Tell her if you can
Whenever she goes to roll that dough
  To wash her dirty hands.

II[1]

Old Joe Clark is dead and gone,
Hope he is doing well.
Made me wear the ball and chain
Till my old ankle swelled.

I went down to old Joe's house,
He was sick in bed;
Rammed my finger down his throat
And pulled out a chicken head.[2]

I went down to old Joe's house,
He was eating supper.
Stumped my toe on the table leg
And rammed my nose in the butter.

Some one stole my old coon dog,
Wish they'd bring him back.
He chased the big hogs through the fence
And the little ones through the crack.

Old Joe Clark had a house,
It was sixteen stories high,
And every room in that house
Just smelled like chicken pie.[3]

*Directions:* The players choose partners and join hands to form a circle. They march around to the right during the singing of the first stanza, reversing the movement for the refrain. Then each boy swings his partner around by the right hand; he swings the next girl by the left hand, and alternates thus until he gets back to his partner. The next movement is a repetition of the preceding one except that the boys swing the girls around twice each time. The players then cross hands and promenade.—William A. Owens, *Swing and Turn: Texas Play-Party Games* (Dallas, 1936), p. 61.

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[1] Sung by Mabel Harryman, Lexington, Cleveland County, Oklahoma.

[2] Elsewhere this becomes a turkey's, rabbit's, or pole-cat's head, and also a wagon bed. Sometimes it is "my girl" who is "sick abed."

[3] The number of stories in Old Joe Clark's house increases, in variants, to twenty, forty, fifty, and sixty; and the pie that fills or lines every story or every room may be pumpkin or apple, though chicken is preferred.

# II. Ballads and Songs

*The song history of America, when some day it gets written . . . will give the feel and atmosphere, the layout and lingo, of regions, of breeds of men, of customs and slogans, in a manner and air not given in regular history. . . . from the hearts and voices of thousands of men and women. They made new songs, they changed old songs, they carried songs from place to place, they resurrected and kept alive dying and forgotten songs. . . . There is something authentic about any person's way of giving a song which has been known, lived with and loved, for many years, by the singer.—Carl Sandburg*

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## Introduction

### "I HEAR AMERICA SINGING"

The obvious entertainment value and popular appeal of folk song as a common denominator and the people's voice has resulted in its virtual monopoly of the present revival of folklore interest, to the relative neglect of the folk tale. This is all to the good, in so far as hearing and singing folk songs has much to tell us about the cultural role of folklore in a democracy. No less than story-telling, singing can be fun. But, while the folk story-teller of today has largely lost his original connection with ritual, the folk singer is a throwback to the bard ("not always clearly differentiated from the medicine-man and the soothsayer"), as distinct from the mere entertainer—a role performed by a few American story-tellers like Mark Twain and Lincoln, who have raised the yarn and the anecdote to the level of scripture.

Recent folk-song activities have resulted in a conspicuous broadening, not only of the audience, but also of the field and concept of folk music to include the whole range of traditional musical idiom, taste, and performance—instrumental as well as vocal; urban as well rural; spirituals, work and occupational songs, game and dance songs, and "protest" songs as well as ballads; written as well as unwritten tradition. From the endless controversy over communal vs. individual, literary vs. folk creation, have emerged the fundamental facts that the making, singing, and transmitting of folk songs is a process of constant collaboration between the individual and the group; that it is the history and use of a song and not its origin that makes it a folk song; and that folk songs originate and spread in many ways and can be accounted for and understood only in relation to their specific function and history in a specific cultural setting.

This is as much as to say that behind the folk song and the individual folk singer is the folk group, at work, worship, or play, which speaks in and through him and is in turn swayed and moved by him. In line with the saying that "In Mexico nobody knows how to sing—and everybody sings!" the folk-song audience, whether on the naive or the sophisticated level, cannot long remain a passive one, but must obey the impulse to join in the chorus.

## "WHY SHOULD THE DEVIL HAVE ALL THE GOOD TUNES?"

In work, game, dance, and religious songs of the choral or leader-and-chorus type, the cooperative nature of folk singing is of the essence of the performance. Although, with the displacement of hand by machine labor, gang work songs or shanties tend to disappear, they still survive under certain conditions, as in prison camps and among dock and levee workers of the South. Meanwhile, the play-party song and the spiritual have preserved the leader-and-chorus pattern.

The history of the spiritual throws light on the cultural role of folk song and the audience. Born in the Great Southern and Western Revival and cradled in the camp meeting (first held in Logan County, Kentucky, in July, 1800), the folk hymn and the revival song caught up and crystallized the holiday spirit and "singing ecstasy" of this great folk gathering, which called for jubilant words and lively tunes. The Bible and the sermon were important influences. Scriptural phrases and "'errant stanzas' of the orthodox hymnody of the eighteenth century" were mingled with ejaculatory phrases in the favorite folk pattern (also common in work and play songs) of repetition and refrain and in the simple, direct, dramatic style of backwoods preaching and exhortation. Tunes were borrowed not only from the older hymnody but from secular folk music, including dance tunes (the best example, perhaps, being "Captain Kidd," whose melodic pattern turns up in "Wondrous Love," among others). Like every good rule, this one works both ways, many ballads, like "Barbara Allen," in at least one version, being sung to hymn tunes.[1]

Taking over the basic musical form and concepts of the spirituals as well as individual tunes and stanzas (as George Pullen Jackson has demonstrated), the Negro has, by a process of assimilation and heightening, made them indubitably his own, especially in the performance, where his highly developed sense of rhythm and polyphony are paramount.[2] In the case of the blues—"earth-born" like the spirituals—the process has been reversed. The Negro folk blues have been widely imitated by Tin Pan Alley, while the "blue note" and the instrumental blues have been the most important influence in popular music since ragtime and have also served to attract attention to urban folk music.

Meanwhile, the sanctified song, the shout, and the holy dance have brought jazz instruments and jazz singing styles into the church, partly as a way of competing with secular entertainment and partly in accordance with the injunction of emotional sects like the Holiness Church: "Enjoy your religion." Folk quartets and the hillbilly style have also invaded the hymn, white as well as Negro, under the hybridizing influence of radio and phonograph. A similar mingling of written and unwritten tradition is seen in the shape-note song books and singing schools of the fasola folk (so called from the practice of sol-faing the notes before singing the words), which have kept the old "Harp" singing alive and current. Here is living proof of the fact that, left to word of mouth alone, folk songs would circulate over a restricted time and area and that oral tradition in an age of print is constantly supplemented by the printed word.

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[1] Cf. George Pullen Jackson, *White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands* (1933); *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America* (1937); and *White and Negro Spirituals* (1943). Part of the second section of this Introduction appeared originally in *A Treasury of Southern Folklore* (1949).

[2] Cf. Robert W. Gordon, "The Negro Spiritual," in *The Carolina Low-Country*, pp. 191-192.

## HARD-HITTING SONGS

The choral song, whether of religion, work, or play, illustrates only one aspect, if the most striking one, of folk song as practice and participation. Even when the performance is individual rather than choral, as in ballads and blues, the song may be a "social song" expressing and shaping group attitudes, especially in relation to work and the problems of making a living, but not neglecting the man-and-woman theme.

In his vernacular dramatizations of bible stories the Negro, borrowing the device of the dramatic sermon from his folk religion, made ballads out of spirituals. Here he also gives expression to his sense of moral and social justice, based on his reading of the Hebrew prophets, and finds, in Old Testament heroes and New Testament visions, in hope of heaven and release from sin and sorrow, symbols of his own struggle for freedom.

Even more clear-cut and direct in their use of social themes and protest, work songs and occupational ballads comment realistically and wittily on the hard life and hard times of sailor, lumberjack, cowboy, coal-miner, hobo, and farmer. From these hard-hitting songs, seasoning bitterness with humor, it is only a step to militant songs by worker bards like Joe Hill and Aunt Molly Jackson and to "People's Songs" of labor and political action: "The people are on the march and they must have songs to sing." Because the same rousing tune may serve the purposes of religious revivalism, patriotism and political reform alike, there has been much borrowing back and forth between sacred and secular music in the "freedom song," whether sacred or secular. Thus "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" grew out of a camp-meeting song, "Say, Brothers, Will You Meet Us," by way of a Massachusetts soldier's parody dealing with a Scotch comrade named John Brown, "John Brown's Body," and an abolition ode in honor of John Brown of Ossawatomie, by Edna Dean Proctor, both written to the same tune. Not so very different and no less sure was Joe Hill's instinct in parodying "In the Sweet Bye and Bye" in "The Preacher and the Slave." In another parody he traduces the name and the fame of Casey Jones by making him a scab on the S.P. line, who dies and goes to heaven, where he keeps on scabbing until the Angel's Union, Number 23, throws him into hell:

> Casey Jones, went to Hell a-flying.
> Casey Jones, the Devil said, Oh, fine.
> Casey Jones, get busy shoveling sulphur.
> That's what you get for scabbing on the S.P. Line.

Thus symbol becomes document, and folk song serves to unite men by reminding them not only of their common heritage and their common fate but also of their common problems and common struggles. In this sense, folk song, like language, in Whitman's article on "Slang in America," becomes "not an abstract construction of the learn'd," but "something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity, and has its bases broad and low, close to the ground." Because the "final decisions" of folk song, like those of language, are "made by the masses, people nearest the concrete, having most to do with actual land and sea," American folk song has always had and will continue perhaps increasingly to have, a close and reciprocal relation to social, political and economic attitudes and action.

## DANCE YOUR TROUBLES AWAY

When Charles Wesley asked, "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?" he did not anticipate that devotees of the "devil's music box" and "devil's ditties" might counter with "Why should the Church have all the religion?" Certainly one of the judges at the eleventh annual Mountain Dance and Music Festival at Asheville, North Carolina, August 5, 1938, was more than on the defensive against church criticism of dancing when he stated, in announcing the awards:

> We say these folk dances, next only to our church meetings and religious songs in this section, God's country, typify our Scottish traditions, our local sufficiency within ourselves, our love for and desire to be with each other in happiness, in exultation; it's the all for each and each for all spirit within us, which is our heritage, our raising, so to speak.
>
> The fervor and pathos of mountain music, the community exuberances of these dances, the full physical, spirited outpourings of the folks into them: the snap, the zest, the go-git in them, are entirely unhurtful expressions of whole-hearted mountaineerishness.[1]

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[1] The Asheville (North Carolina) *Citizen*, August 6, 1938, p. 3. Part of the fourth section of this Introduction appeared originally in *A Treasury of Southern Folklore* (1949).

In the mountains the old British ballads may be dying out, largely through the competition of native ballads and hillbilly songs, though the folk festival has helped to revive them. Meanwhile, folk music is still as vigorous and flourishing as when Bob Taylor's fiddle, rifle, ax, and Bible were the humble penates of the pioneer's cabin. In spite of the inroads of literacy and education (including music education), traditional styles of singing and playing have not become a lost art, and the making of folk songs is not a closed account. They linger on as a species of folk idiom and folk art, combining beauty with utility and individual with group expressiveness, displaying a plasticity and a sense of craftsmanship not afforded by standardized and ready-made forms.

—B. A. B.

## British and American Ballads

### BONNY BARBARA ALLEN

It was upon a high, high hill,
Two maidens chose their dwelling,
And one was known both far and wide,
Was known as Barb'ra Allen.

'Twas in the merry month of May,
All the flowers blooming,
A young man on his deathbed lay
For the love of Barb'ra Allen.

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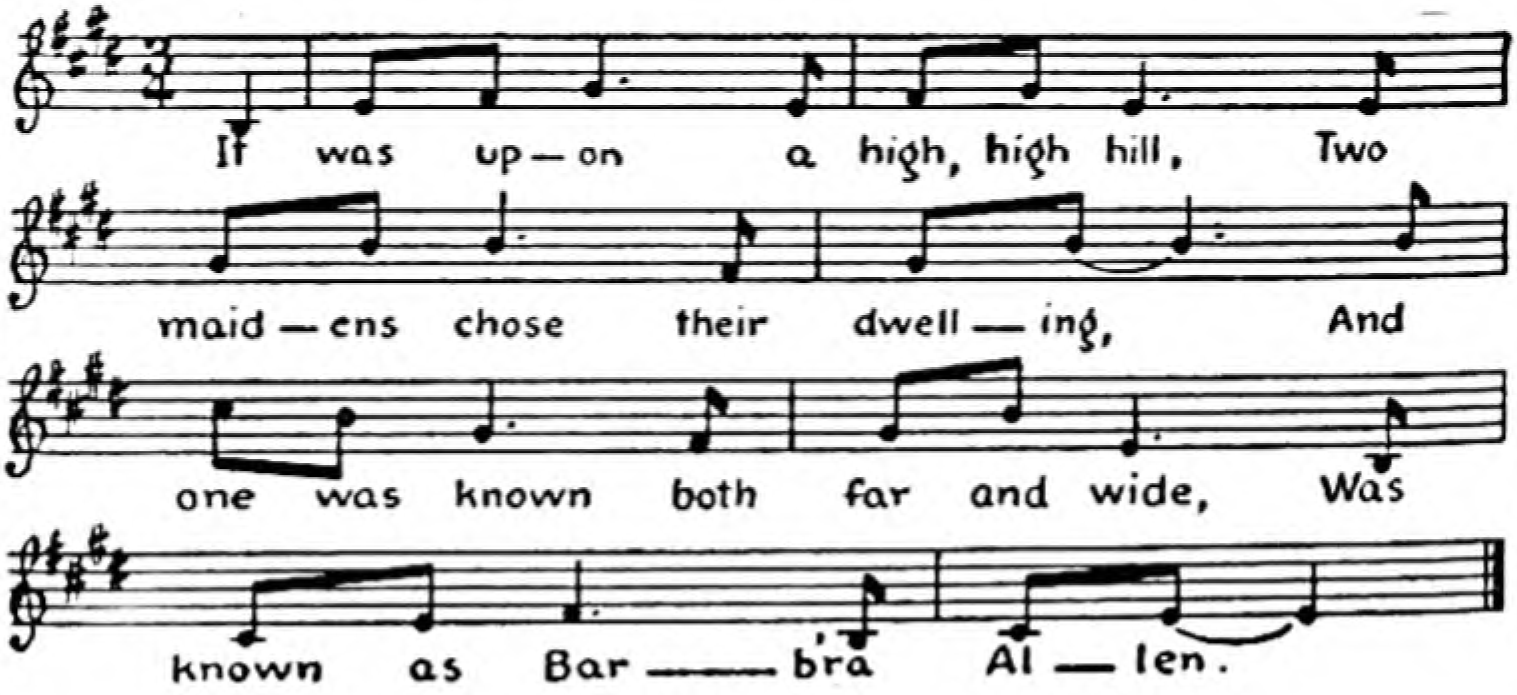
From *American Anthology of Old-World Ballads*, compiled and edited by Reed Smith, settings by Hilton Rufty, pp. 32-34. Copyright, 1937, by J. Fischer & Bro. New York.


It was up—on a high, high hill, Two
maid—ens chose their dwell—ing, And
one was known both far and wide, Was
known as Bar—b'ra Al—len.

He sent a servant unto her
In the town where she was dwelling.
"Come, Miss, O Miss to my master dying
If your name be Barb'ra Allen!"

Slowly, slowly she got up,
And to his bedside going,
She drew the curtain to one side
And said, "Young man you're dying."

He stretched one pale hand to her
As though he would to touch her.
She hopped and skipped across the floor.
"Young man," says, "I won't have you."

"Remember, 'member in the town,
'Twas in the tavern drinking,
You drank a health to the ladies all
But you slighted Barb'ra Allen."

---

Of all the ballads in America "Barbara Allen" has more texts, more tunes, and wider geographical spread than any other. It is found all over the United States. Virginia, alone, for example, affords ninety-two variant texts and a dozen tunes. Six different tunes have been recorded in New England. Its wide American prevalence is not entirely due to oral tradition, for it has appeared in many old songbooks, first in *The American Songster* issued at Baltimore in 1830 and repeatedly since.

In Great Britain it was first printed in Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany,* 1740, and next in Percy's *Reliques*, 1765.—R. S.

He turned his face toward the wall,
His back upon his darling.
"I know I shall see you no more,
So goodbye, Barb'ra Allen."

As she was going to her home,
She heard the church bell tolling.
She looked to the east and looked to the west,
And saw the corpse a-coming.

"O hand me down that corpse of clay
That I may look upon it.
I might have saved that young man's life,
If I had done my duty.

"O mother, mother, make my bed;
O make it long and narrow.
Sweet William died for me today,
I shall die for him tomorrow."

Sweet William died on a Saturday night,
And Barb'ra Allen on a Sunday.
The old lady died for the love of them both,
She died on Easter morning.

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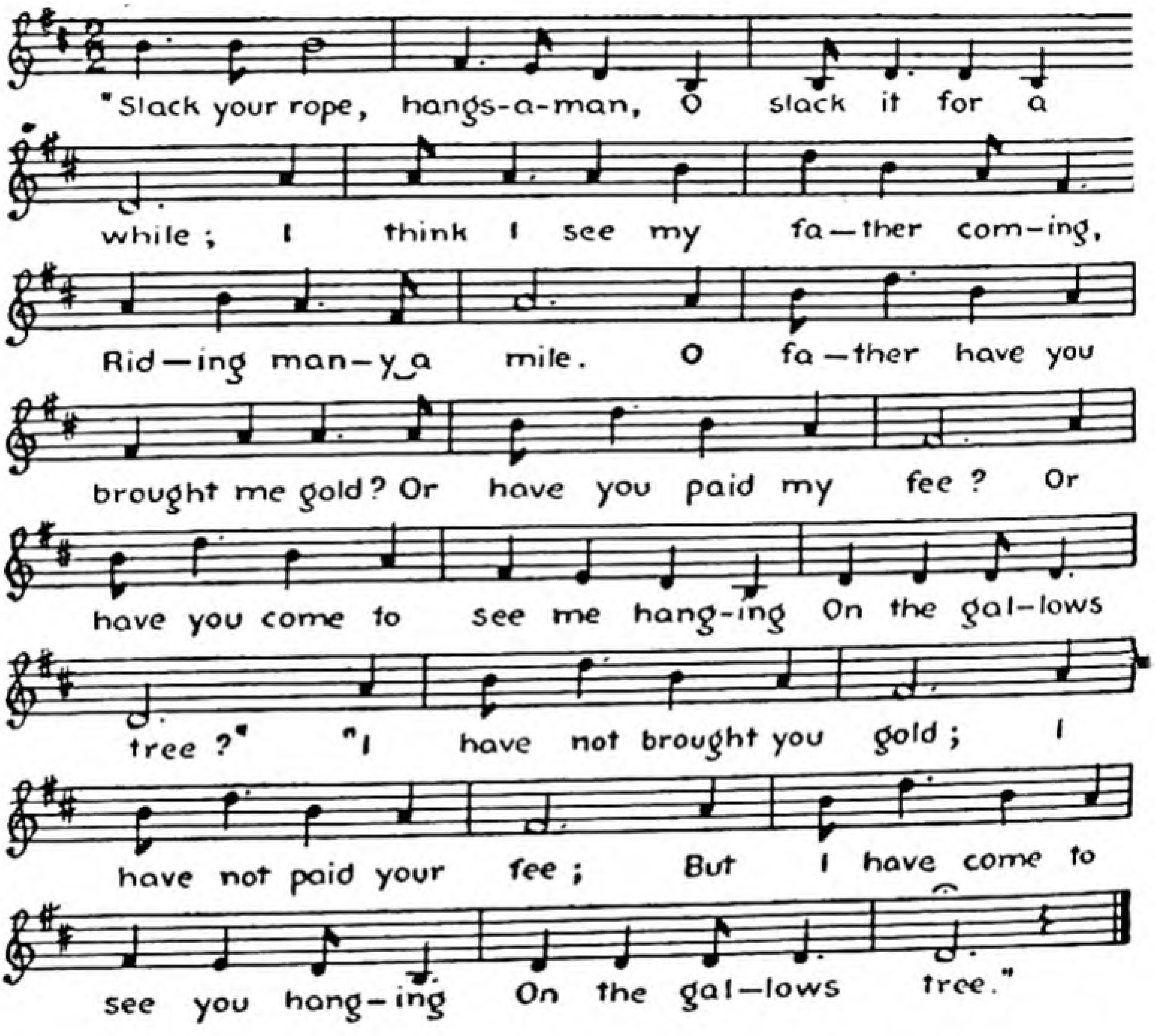
Sweet William was buried in one graveyard,
Barb'ra Allen in another;
A rose grew on Sweet William's grave
And a brier on Barb'ra Allen's.

They grew and they grew to the steeple top,
And there they grew no higher;
And there they tied in a true-lover knot,
The rose clung 'round the brier.

## THE HANGMAN'S TREE


"Slack your rope, hangs-a-man, O slack it for a
while; I think I see my fa—ther com—ing,
Rid—ing man—y a mile. O fa—ther have you
brought me gold? Or have you paid my fee? Or
have you come to see me hang-ing On the gal-lows
tree?" "I have not brought you gold; I
have not paid your fee; But I have come to
see you hang—ing On the gal—lows tree."

"Slack your rope, hangsman,
O slack it for a while;
I think I see my father coming,
Riding many a mile."

---

*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

"The Hangman's Tree" is one of the oldest and most interesting of the ballads. Along with "Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight" and "Lord Randal" it has a remarkable European spread. Versions are known not only in English and Scottish but also in Sicilian, Spanish, Faroese, Icelandic, Swedish, Danish, German, Esthonian, Wendish, Russian, Little-Russian, and Slavonian. Truly a remarkable distribution.

The story the ballad tells is clear: the girl has been condemned to die presumably for the loss (or theft) of a golden ball or key. In some of the non-

"O father have you brought me gold?
Or have you paid my fee?
Or have you come to see me hanging
On the gallows tree?"
"I have not brought you gold;
I have not paid your fee;
But I have come to see you hanging
On the gallows tree."

"Slack your rope, hangsman,
O slack it for a while;
I think I see my mother[1] coming," etc.

"Slack your rope, hangsman,
O slack it for a while;
I think I see my true love coming," etc.
"Yes, I have brought you gold;
Yes, I have paid your fee;
Nor have I come to see you hanging
On the gallows tree."

---

English forms of the ballad the victim has fallen into the hands of corsairs or pirates, who demand ransom, but none of the English or American versions account for the situation in this way. . . .

Still persisting all over the Eastern half of America this ballad is especially common in the South, where many versions have been recorded. It is easily the favorite of all the traditional ballads among the Negroes, who relish the dramatic situation and fall in naturally with the easy method of telling the story in groups of three repetitive stanzas. The ballad drama has also become a child's game known as "The Golden Ball," and also exists as a *cante-fable* among the Negroes of the West Indies.—R. S.

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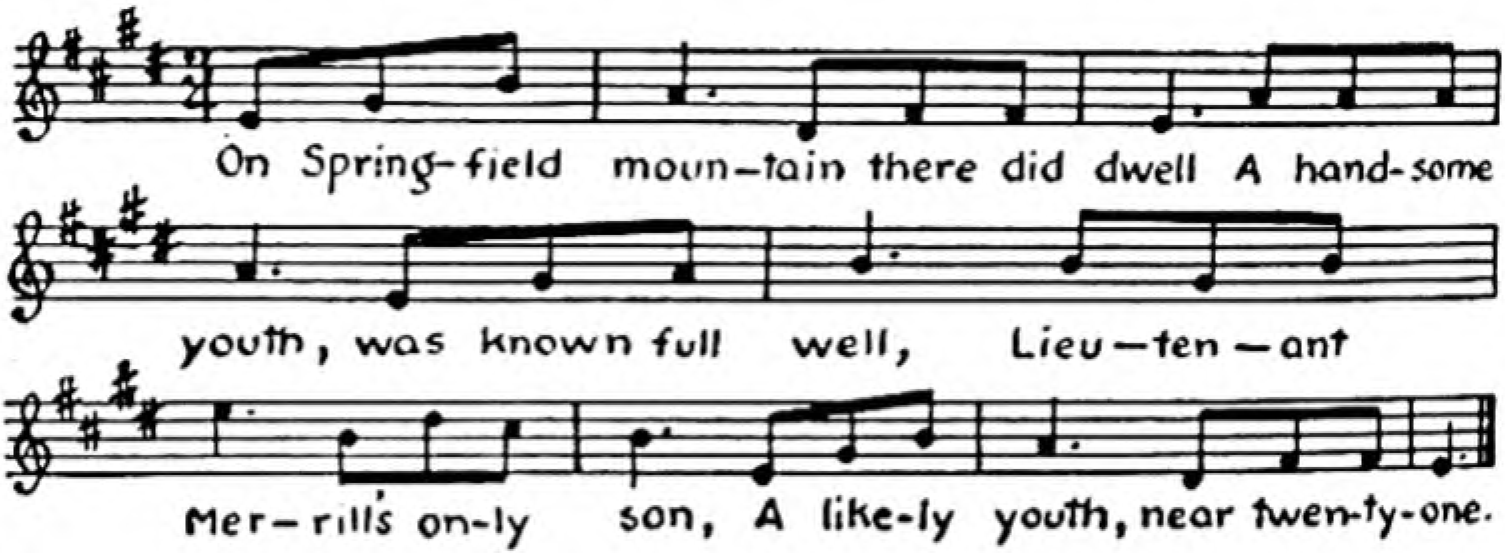
[1] And so on for brother, sister, aunt, uncle, cousin, etc.—R. S.

## ON SPRINGFIELD MOUNTAIN


On Spring-field moun-tain there did dwell A hand-some
youth, was known full well, Lieu-ten-ant
Mer-rill's on-ly son, A like-ly youth, near twen-ty-one.

On Springfield mountain there did dwell
A handsome youth, was known full well,
Lieutenant Merrill's only son,
A likely youth, near twenty-one.

On Friday morning he did go
Down to the meadows for to mow.
He mowed, he mowed all around the field
With a poisonous serpent at his heel.

When he received his deathly wound
He laid his scythe down on the ground.
For to return was his intent,
Calling aloud, long as he went.

His calls were heard both far and near
But no friend to him did appear.
They thought he did some workman call.
Alas, poor man, alone did fall!

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From *Vermont Folk-Songs & Ballads*, Edited by Helen Hartness Flanders and George Brown, pp. 15-16. The Green Mountain Series. Copyright, 1932, by Arthur Wallace Peach as Trustee for Committee on Vermont Traditions and Ideals. Brattleboro: Stephen Daye Press.

-Recorded by Mr. Brown in Townshend, Vermont, from the singing of Mr. Josiah S. Kennison. Mr. Kennison's version of this truly New England folk-song differs from almost all others in that it is entirely serious, and without a trace of the caricature and clownishness that usually characterize the piece.—H. H. F.

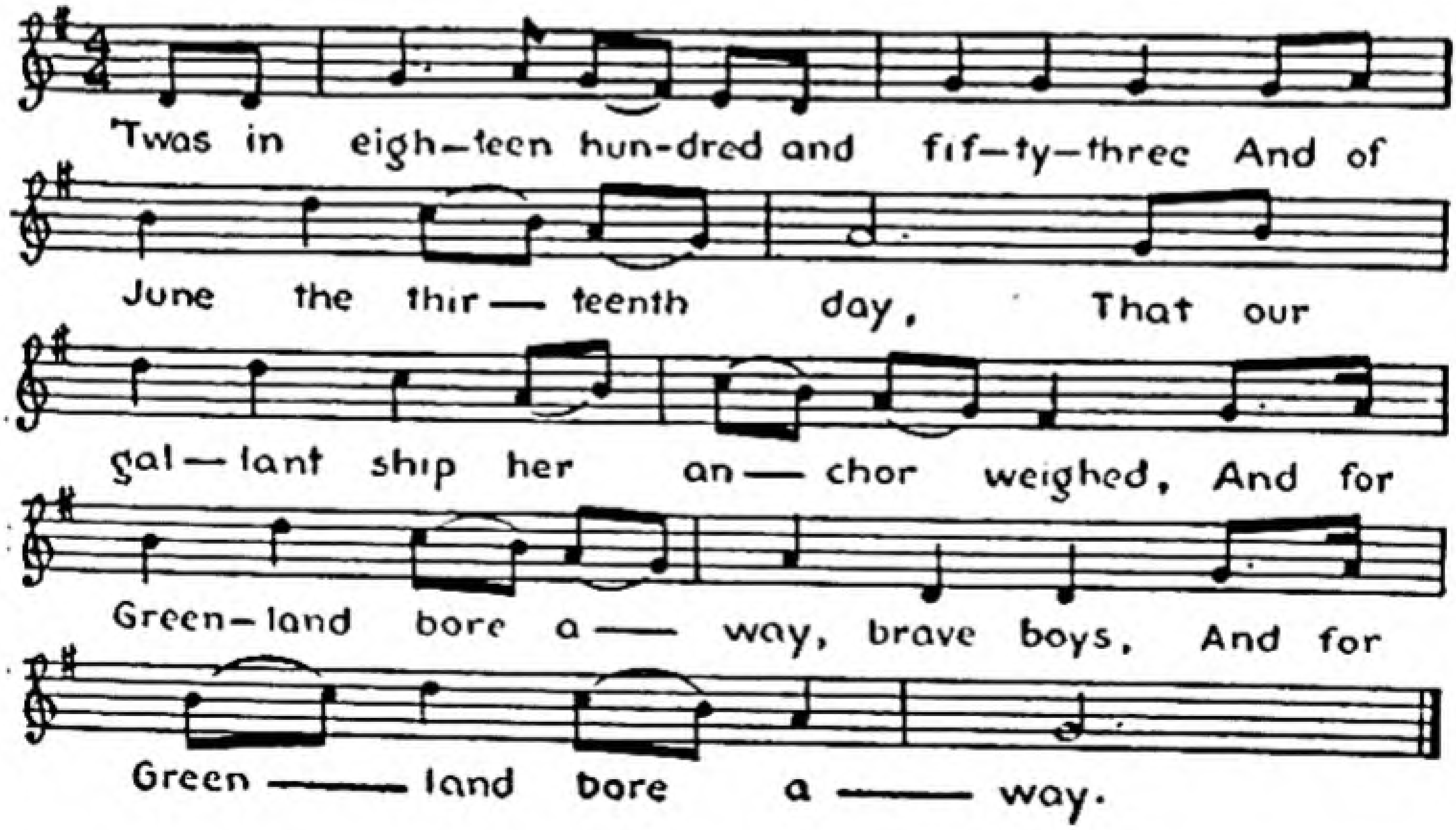
Day being past, night coming on,
The father went to seek his son,
And there he found his only son
Cold as a stone, dead on the ground.

He took him up and he carried him home
And on the way did lament and mourn,
Saying, "I heard but did not come,
And now I'm left alone to mourn."

In the month of August, the twenty-first,
When this sad accident was done.
May this a warning be to all,
To be prepared when God shall call.

## Songs of Sailormen

### GREENLAND FISHERY


'Twas in eigh-teen hun-dred and fif-ty-three And of
June the thir— teenth day, That our
gal— lant ship her an— chor weighed, And for
Green-land bore a— way, brave boys, And for
Green —— land bore a —— way.

---

From *Songs of American Sailormen*, by Joanna C. Colcord, pp. 151-152. Copyright, 1938, by W. W. Norton & Company, New York.
A forecastle song. Joanna Colcord notes: " 'Greenland Fishery' or 'The Whale'

'Twas in eighteen hundred and fifty three
And of June the thirteenth day,
That our gallant ship her anchor weighed,
And for Greenland bore away, brave boys,
And for Greenland bore away.

The lookout in the crosstrees stood,
With his spyglass in his hand.
"There's a whale, there's a whale, there's a whalefish," he cried,
"And she blows at every span, brave boys,
And she blows at every span."

The captain stood on the quarter-deck,
And a fine little man was he.
"Overhaul! Overhaul! Let your davit-tackles fall,
And launch your boats for sea, brave boys,
And launch your boats for sea."

Now the boats were launched and the men aboard,
And the whale was in full view;
Resolv-ed was each seaman bold
To steer where the whalefish blew, brave boys,
To steer where the whalefish blew.

We struck that whale, the line paid out,
But she gave a flourish with her tail;
The boat capsized and four men were drowned,
And we never caught that whale, brave boys,
And we never caught that whale.

"To lose the whale," our captain said,
"It grieves my heart full sore;
But oh! to lose four gallant men,
It grieves me ten times more, brave boys,
It grieves me ten times more."

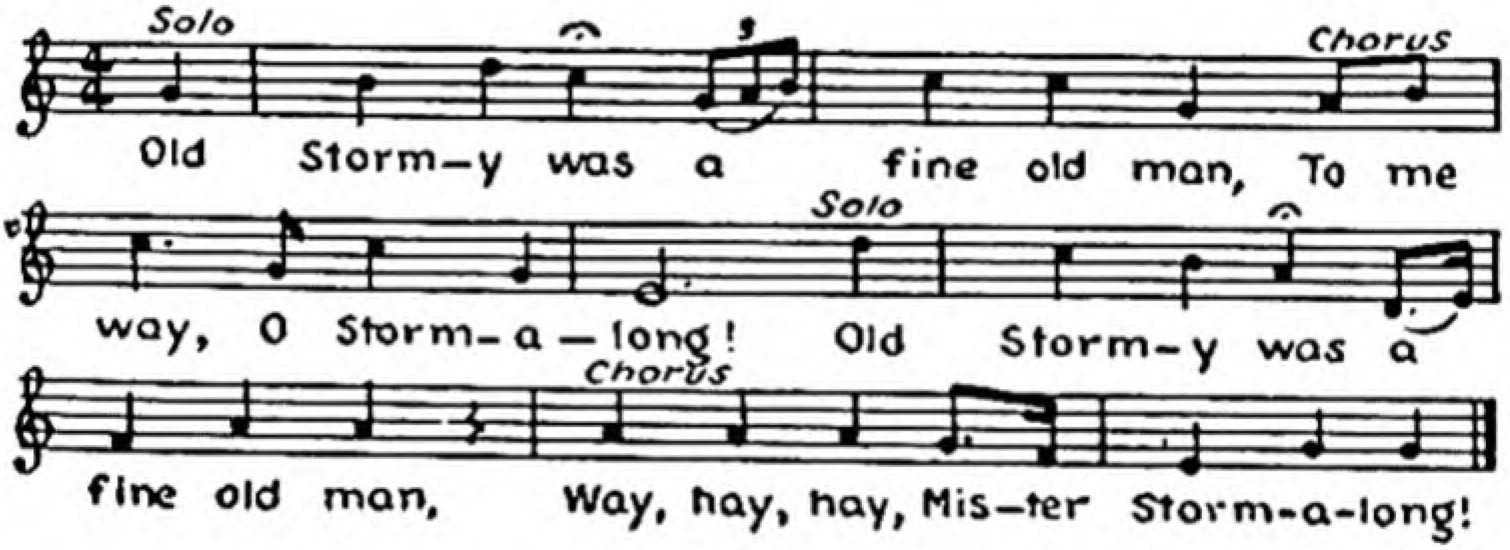
---

was not more popular on whaling ships than in the ships of the merchant marine. It arose in the British, not the American, whaling trade, probably in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and in the earlier British versions, the ship's name, the *Lion*, and the captain's, Speedicutt, are both preserved."

"The winter star doth now appear,
So, boys, we'll anchor weigh;
It's time to leave this cold country,
And homeward bear away, brave boys,
And homeward bear away."

Oh, Greenland is a dreadful place,
A land that's never green,
Where there's ice and snow, and the whalefishes blow,
And the daylight's seldom seen, brave boys,
And the daylight's seldom seen.

## STORMALONG


Solo
Chorus
Old Storm-y was a fine old man, To me way, O Storm-a-long!
Solo
Old Storm-y was a fine old man,
Chorus
Way, hay, hay, Mis-ter Storm-a-long!

*Solo:* Old Stormy was a fine old man,
*Chorus:* To me way, O Stormalong!
*Solo:* Old Stormy was a fine old man,
*Chorus:* Way, hay, hay, Mister Stormalong!

Old Stormy he is dead and gone,
Oh, poor old Stormy's dead and gone.

We'll dig his grave with a silver spade, *(twice)*

And lower him down with a golden chain. *(twice)*

I wish I was old Stormy's son;
I'd build me a ship of a thousand ton.

---

*Ibid.*, pp. 88-89. This is an example of a windlass or capstan shanty. Bullen says . . . : "It embodies all the admiration that a sailor used to feel

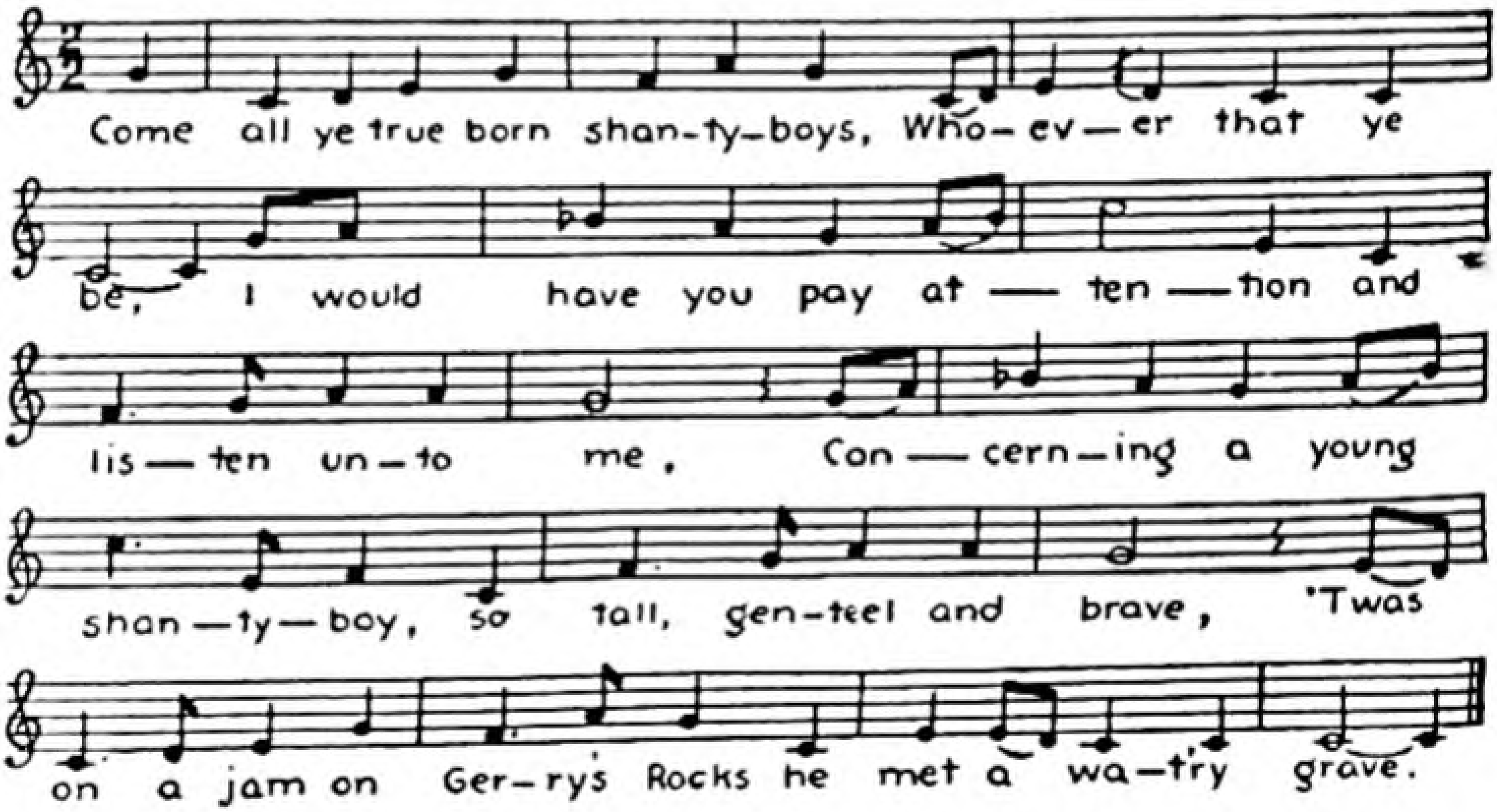
I'd sail this wide world round and round;
With plenty of money I'd be found.

I'd fill her up with New England rum,
And all my shellbacks they'd have some.

Oh, Stormy's dead and gone to rest;
Of all the sailors he was the best.

## Lumberjack Songs

### GERRY'S ROCKS


Come all ye true born shan-ty-boys, Who-ev-er that ye
be, I would have you pay at — ten — tion and
lis — ten un-to me, Con — cern-ing a young
shan — ty — boy, so tall, gen-teel and brave, 'Twas
on a jam on Ger-rys Rocks he met a wa-try grave.

Come all ye true born shanty-boys, whoever that ye be,
I would have you pay attention and listen unto me,
Concerning a young shanty-boy so tall, genteel, and brave,
'Twas on a jam on Gerry's Rocks he met a wat'ry grave.

---

for a great seaman; gives it expression, as it were, though I have never been able to learn who the antetype of Stormalong could have been. I suspect that he was just the embodiment of all the prime seamen the sailor had ever known, and in the song he voiced his heart's admiration."—J. C.

---

From *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy*, collected and edited by Fra[illegible] Rickaby, pp. 11-14. Copyright, 1926, by Harvard University Press. Cambridge.

This ballad, one of several celebrating death by that most spectacular of all

It happened on a Sunday morn as you shall quickly hear.
Our logs were piled up mountain high, there being no one to keep them clear.
Our boss he cried, "Turn out, brave boys. Your hearts are void of fear.
We'll break that jam on Gerry's Rocks, and for Agonstown we'll steer."

Some of them were willing enough, but others they hung back.
'Twas for to work on Sabbath they did not think 'twas right.
But six of our brave Canadian boys did volunteer to go
And break the jam on Gerry's Rocks with their foreman, young Monroe.

They had not rolled off many logs when the boss to them did say,
"I'd have you be on your guard, brave boys. That jam will soon give way."
But scarce the warning had he spoke when the jam did break and go,
And it carried away these six brave youths and their foreman, young Monroe.

When the rest of the shanty-boys these sad tidings came to hear,
To search for their dead comrades to the river they did steer.
One of these a headless body found, to their sad grief and woe,
Lay cut and mangled on the beach the head of young Monroe.

They took him from the water and smoothed down his raven hair.
There was one fair form amongst them, her cries would rend the air.
There was one fair form amongst them, a maid from Saginaw town.
Her sighs and cries would rend the skies for her lover that was drowned.

---

hazards in lumbering, the log jam, was easily the most widely current of all lumber woods songs. Some of the old fellows have told me that anyone starting *Gerry's Rocks* in the shanties was summarily shut off because the song was sung to death; others vow that of all songs it was ever and always the most welcome.

* * * * *

One of the most interesting elements in the story, one which appears in all versions, and happily one reflecting a well-authenticated shanty-boy habit, is the subscription presented to the bereaved sweetheart. In actual life this contribution was sent the wife or other dependent; but the practice was common. —F. R.

They buried him quite decently, being on the seventh of May.
Come all the rest of you shanty-boys, for your dead comrade pray.
'Tis engraved on a little hemlock tree that at his head doth grow,
The name, the date, and the drowning of this hero, young Monroe.

Miss Clara was a noble girl, likewise the raftsman's friend.
Her mother was a widow woman lived at the river's bend.
The wages of her own true love the boss to her did pay,
And a liberal subscription she received from the shanty-boys next day.

Miss Clara did not long survive her great misery and grief.
In less than three months afterwards death came to her relief.
In less than three months afterwards she was called to go,
And her last request was granted—to be laid by young Monroe.

Come all the rest of ye shanty-men who would like to go and see,
On a little mound by the river's bank there stands a hemlock tree.
The shanty-boys cut the woods all around. These lovers they lie low.
Here lies Miss Clara Dennison and her shanty-boy, Monroe.

## THE LITTLE BROWN BULLS

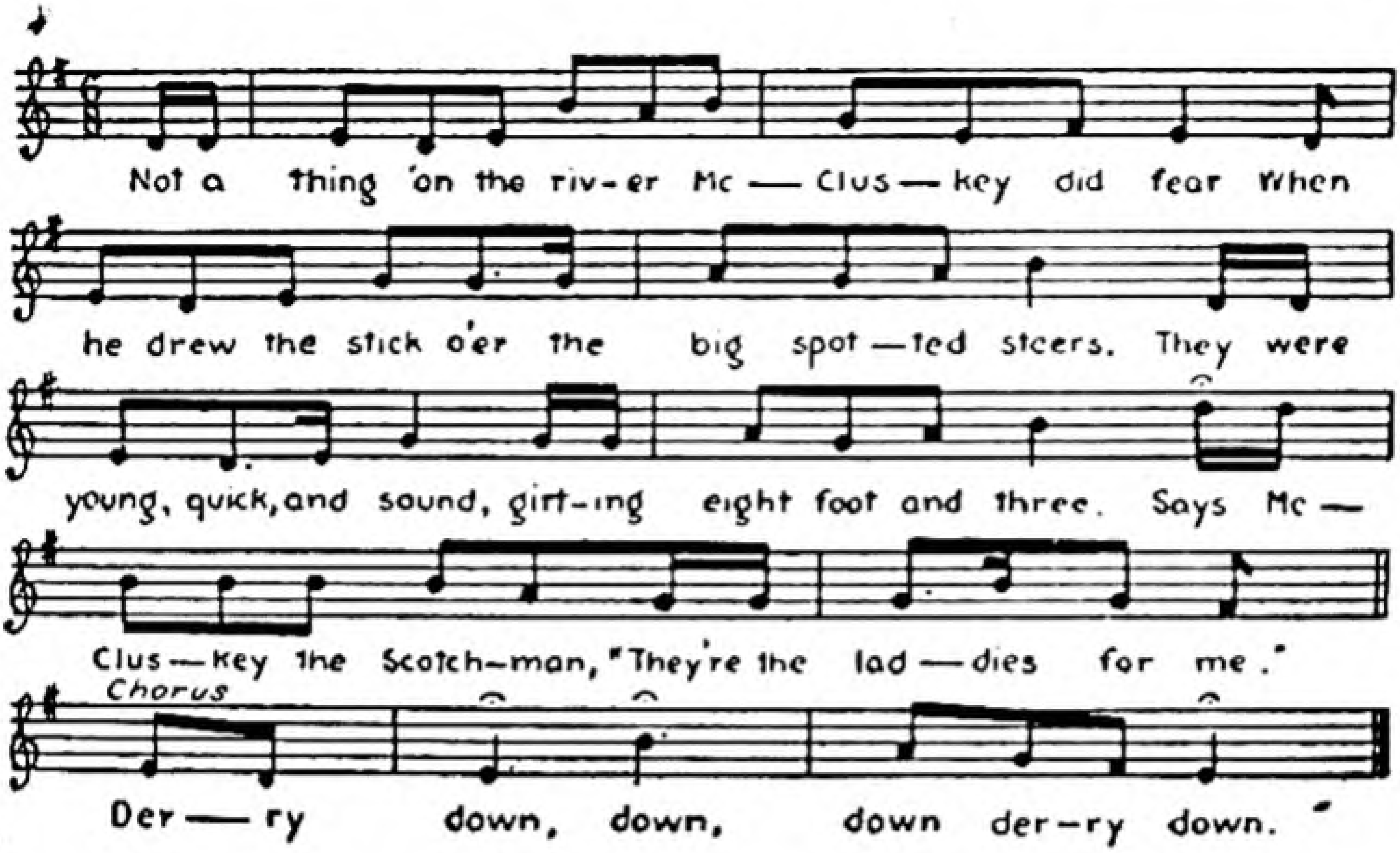
Not a thing on the river McCluskey did fear
When he drew the stick o'er the big spotted steers.
They were young, quick, and sound, girting eight foot and three.
Says McCluskey the Scotchman, "They're the laddies for me."

---

*Ibid.*, pp. 65-68.

This is an old Wisconsin classic, dating from the days when oxen were used in the woods almost entirely. It resounds with that valorous spirit of the days when supremacy among men and animals was measured in terms of ability to do work, to stand physical exertion. Competition between camps, teams and even individual men, was a tremendous driving force. . . . One cannot help regretting the ballad "leap" between stanzas 9 and 10; for, although one gets from the ballad as it is a considerable reflection of the spirit in which the contest was waged, there is no word of the battle itself, which must have had its Homeric aspects.

According to Mr. Fred Bainter, the singer . . . , the ballad was composed in Mart Douglas's camp in northwestern Wisconsin in 1872 or 1873. It was in this camp and at this date, he said, that the contest between the big spotted steers and the little brown bulls was waged.—F. R.


Not a thing on the riv-er Mc—Clus—key did fear When
he drew the stick o'er the big spot—ted steers. They were
young, quick, and sound, girt-ing eight foot and three. Says Mc—
Clus—key the Scotch-man, "They're the lad—dies for me."
Chorus
Der—ry down, down, down der-ry down.

*Chorus:*

Derry down, down, down derry down.

Bull Gordon, the Yankee, on skidding was full,
As he cried "Whoa-*hush*" to the little brown bulls.
Short-legged and soggy, girt six foot and nine.
Says McCluskey the Scotchman, "Too light for our pine."

It's three to the thousand our contract did call.
Our hauling was good and the timber was tall.
McCluskey he swore he'd make the day full
And skid two to one of the little brown bulls.

"Oh no," says Bull Gordon; "that you cannot do,
Though it's well do we know you've the pets of the crew.
And mark you, my boy, you would have your hands full,
If you skid one more log than the little brown bulls."

The day was appointed and soon it drew nigh,
For twenty-five dollars their fortunes to try.
Both eager and anxious that morning were found,
And scalers and judges appeared on the ground.

With a whoop and a yell came McCluskey in view,
With the big spotted steers, the pets of the crew,
Both chewing their cuds—"O boys, keep your jaws full,
For you easily can beat them, the little brown bulls."

Then out came Bull Gordon with a pipe in his jaw,
The little brown bulls with their cuds in their mouths;
And little we think, when we seen them come down,
That a hundred and forty could they jerk around.

Then up spoke McCluskey: "Come stripped to the skin.
We'll dig them a hole and tumble them in.
We'll learn the d—d Yankee to face the bold Scot.
We'll mix them a dose and feed it red hot."

Said Gordon to Stebbin, with blood in his eye,
"Today we must conquer McCluskey or die."
Then up spoke bold Kennebec, "Boy, never fear,
For you ne'er shall be beat by the big spotted steers."

The sun had gone down when the foreman did say,
"Turn out, boys, turn out; you've enough for the day.
We have scaled them and counted, each man to his team,
And it's well do we know now which one kicks the beam."

After supper was over McCluskey appeared
With the belt ready made for the big spotted steers.
To form it he'd torn up his best mackinaw.
He was bound he'd conduct it according to law.

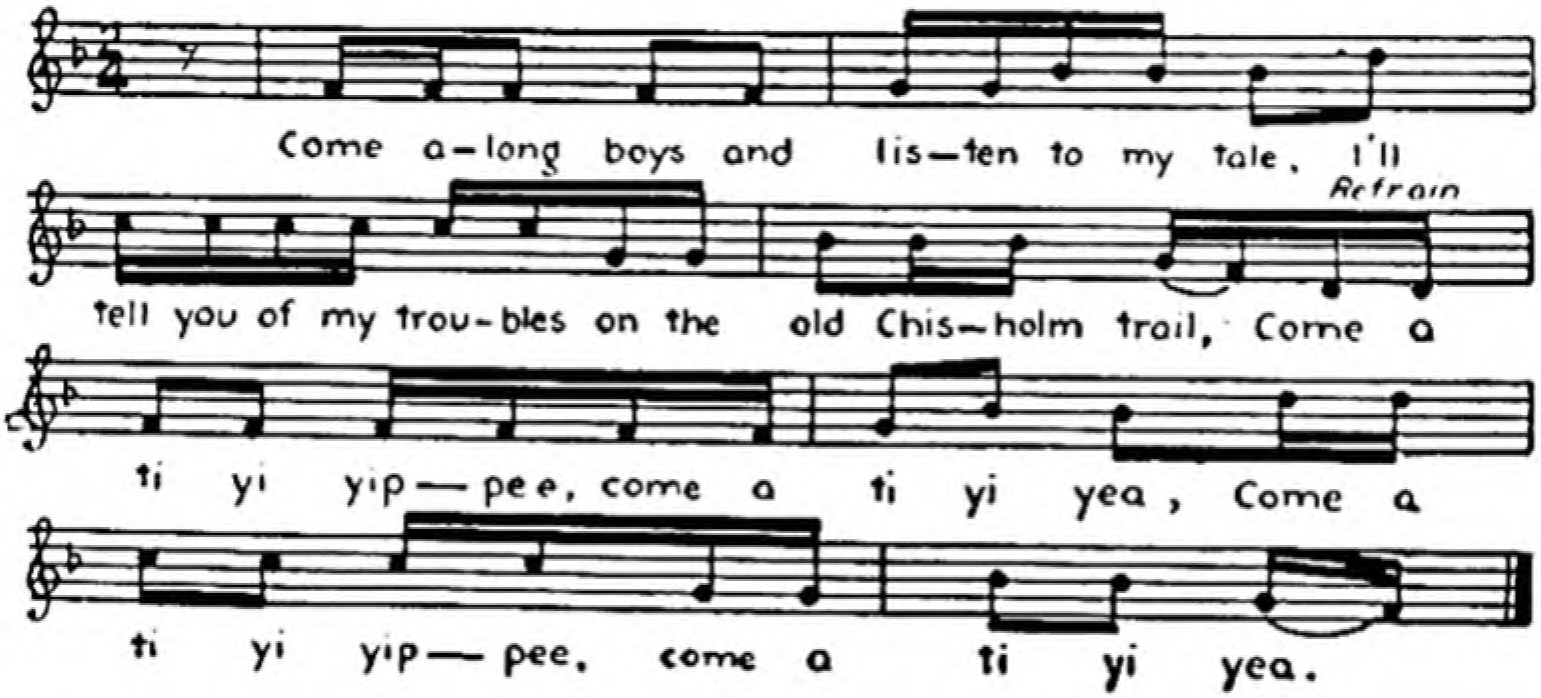
Then up spoke the scaler, "Hold on, you, a while.
The big spotted steers are behind just one mile.
For you have a hundred and ten and no more,
And Gordon has beat you by ten and a score."

The shanty did ring and McCluskey did swear.
He tore out by handfuls his long yellow hair.
Says he to Bull Gordon, "My colors I'll pull.
So here, take the belt for the little brown bulls."

Here's health to Bull Gordon and Kennebec John;
The biggest day's work on the river they done.
So fill up your glasses and fill them up full;
We'll drink to the health of the little brown bulls.

## Cowboy Songs

### THE OLD CHISHOLM TRAIL


Come a-long boys and lis-ten to my tale, I'll
tell you of my trou-bles on the old Chis-holm trail, Come a
Refrain
ti yi yip—pee, come a ti yi yea, Come a
ti yi yip—pee, come a ti yi yea.

Come along boys and listen to my tale,
I'll tell you of my troubles on the old Chisholm trail.

*Refrain:*
Come a ti yi yippee, come a ti yi yea,
Come a ti yi yippee, come a ti yi yea.

---

From *American Songs for American Children*, [edited by Alan Lomax, Charles Seeger, and Ruth Crawford Seeger], pp. 8-9. Chicago: Music Educators National Conference. 1942.

The Chisholm Trail once wound all the way from San Antonio to Montana, and old-time punchers say that if you laid all the stanzas of this ballad end to end, they would stretch all the way to the Canadian line.

This song is the cowboy folk-song par excellence, completely improvised and casual, and every man who ever sang it added his own verses. In fact, it's still growing to-day. Into it the cowboys poured the account of every movement, every accident of the day's work. If the foreman of an outfit drove his men too

Oh, a ten-dollar hoss and a forty-dollar saddle,
And I'm goin' to punchin' Texas cattle.

I wake in the mornin' afore daylight
And afore I sleep the moon shines bright.

It's cloudy in the west, a-lookin' like rain,
And my durned old slicker's in the wagon again.

No chaps, no slicker, and it's pourin' down rain,
And I swear, by gosh, I'll never night-herd again.

Feet in the stirrups and seat in the saddle,
I hung and rattled with them long-horn cattle.

The wind commenced to blow, and the rain began to fall,
Hit looked, by grab, like we was goin' to lose 'em all.

I don't give a darn if they never do stop;
I'll ride as long as an eight-day clock.

We rounded 'em up and put 'em on the cars,
And that was the last of the old Two Bars.

Oh, it's bacon and beans most every day,
I'd as soon be a-eatin' prairie hay.

I went to the boss to draw my roll,
He had it figgered out I was nine dollars in the hole.

Goin' back to town to draw my money,
Goin' back home to see my honey.

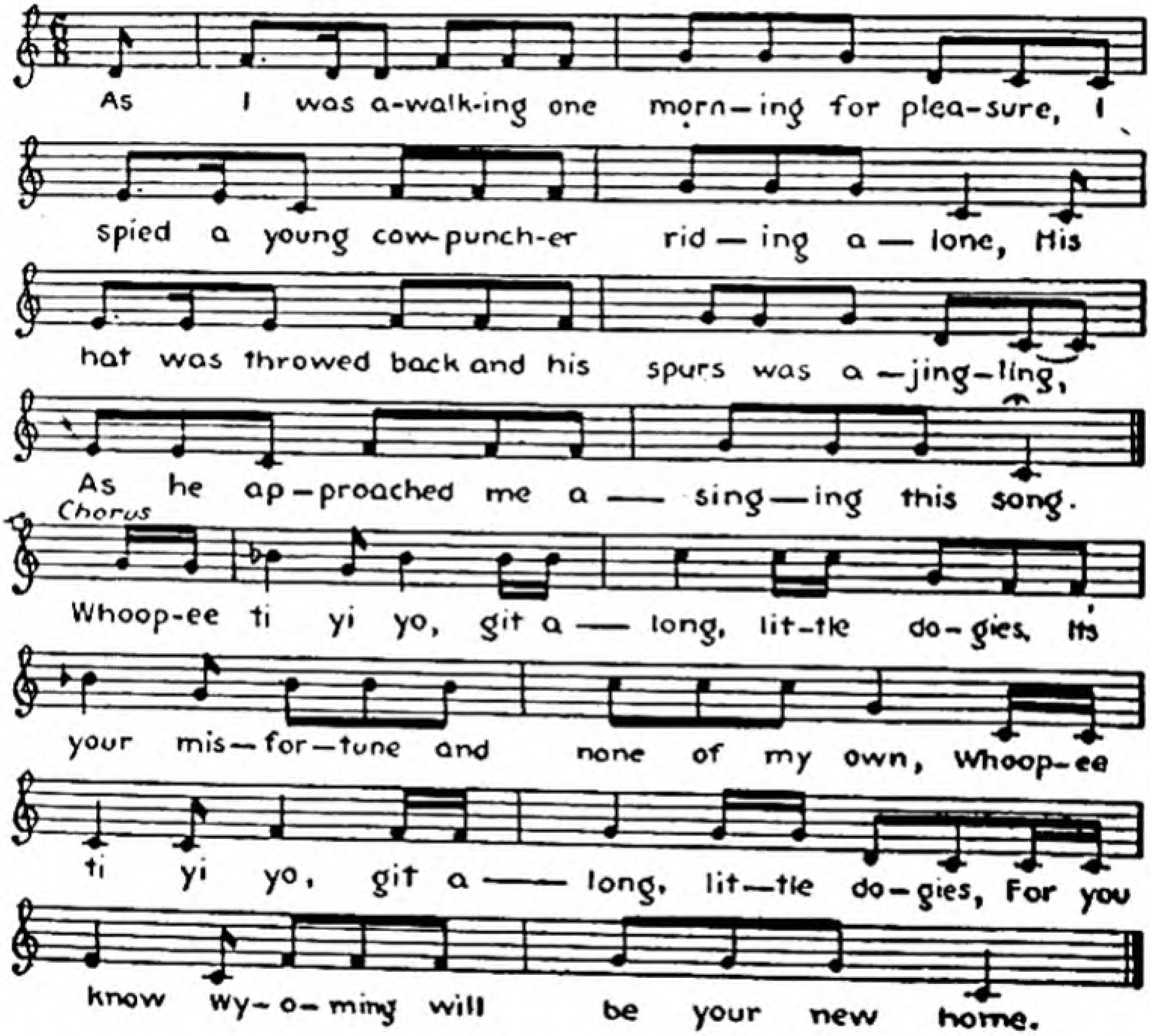
---

hard, he was sure to be made the butt of some satiric stanza of this cowboy epic. When a cowboy dashed away after an unruly steer to turn him back into the herd, he might shout out a new stanza to the rhythm of his galloping horse as he rode.

There are almost as many versions of the ballad as there are singers, but the tunes are all basically kin. All end with the "ti-yi-youpy" or the "ki-yi-yippy" refrain, which may be an imitation of an Indian war-cry, for the Indians taught the Mexicans how to tame and ride the Western pony and the Mexican vaqueros taught the Texas cowboys. My father, John A. Lomax, says that this version is the one that was sung to the easy-pace gait of the cowpony—the gentle, rocking pace that devours miles and does not tire the rider.—A. L.

With my knees in the saddle and my seat in the sky,
I'll quit punchin' cows in the sweet by and by.

## GIT ALONG, LITTLE DOGIES


As I was a-walk-ing one morn-ing for plea-sure, I
spied a young cow-punch-er rid-ing a-lone, His
hat was throwed back and his spurs was a-jing-ling,
As he ap-proached me a-sing-ing this song.
Chorus
Whoop-ee ti yi yo, git a-long, lit-tle do-gies, It's
your mis-for-tune and none of my own, Whoop-ee
ti yi yo, git a-long, lit-tle do-gies, For you
know Wy-o-ming will be your new home.

As I was a-walking one morning for pleasure,
I spied a young cowpuncher a-riding alone.
His hat was throwed back and his spurs was a-jingling,
As he approached me a-singing this song.

---

From *Singing Cowboy*, A Book of Western Songs, collected and edited by Margaret Larkin, arranged for the piano by Helen Black, pp. 96-97. Copyright, 1931, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. New York.

*Chorus:*

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
It's your misfortune and none of my own,
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

Some fellows goes up the trail for pleasure,
But that's where they've got it most awfully wrong,
For you haven't an idea the trouble they give us,
As we go a-driving them dogies along.

Oh, you'll be soup for Uncle Sam's Injuns,
"It's beef, heap beef," I hear them cry.
Git along, git along, you lazy little mavericks,
You're going to be beef steers by and by.

The night's coming on, we'll hold them on the bedground,
These little dogies that roll on so slow.
Round up the herd and cut out the strays,
And roll the little dogies that never rolled before.

## Miners' Songs

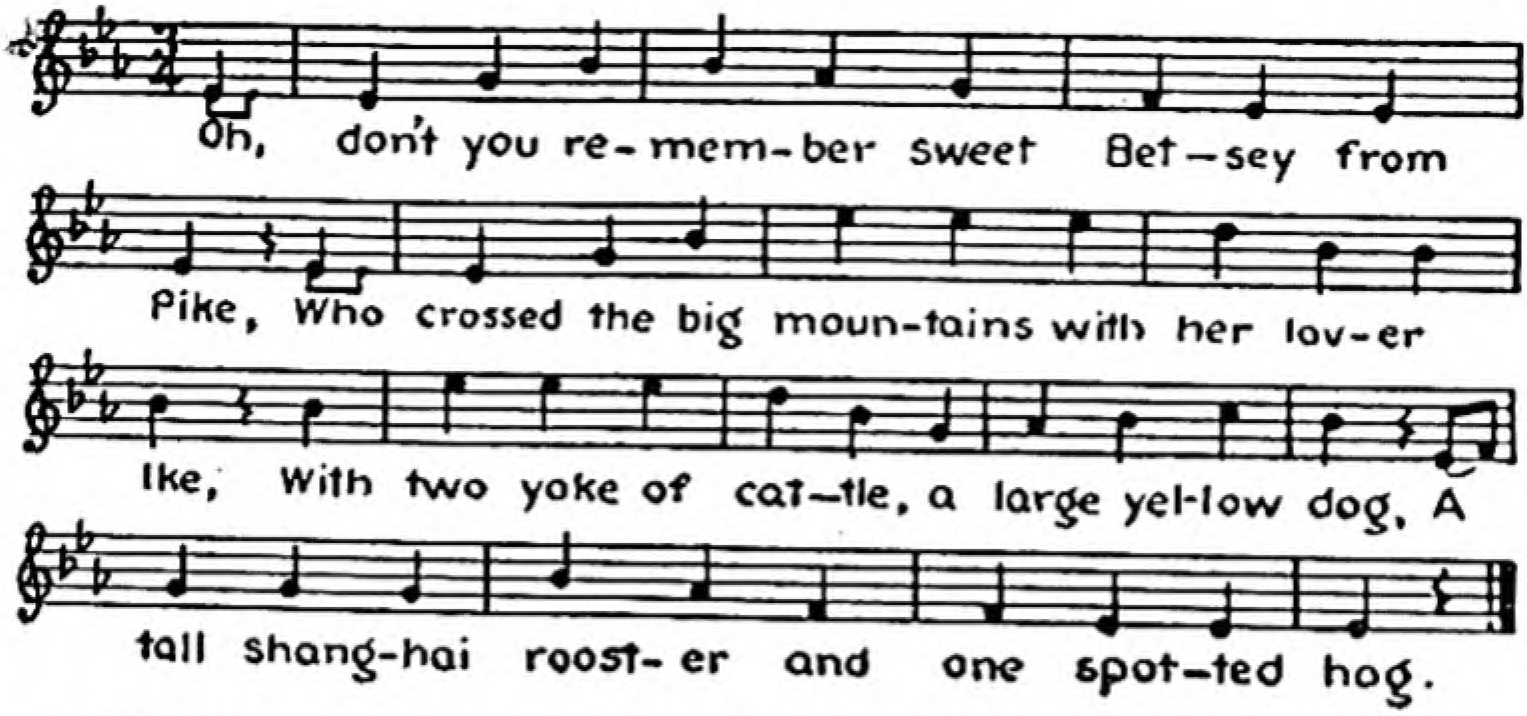
### SWEET BETSEY FROM PIKE

Oh, don't you remember sweet Betsey from Pike,
Who crossed the big mountains with her lover Ike,
With two yoke of cattle, a large yellow dog,
A tall shanghai rooster and one spotted hog.

---

From *Put's Golden Songster,* Containing the Largest and Most Popular Collection of California Songs Ever Published, by the Author of "Put's Original California Songster," pp. 50-52. Copyright, 1858, by John A. Stone. San Francisco: D. E. Appleton & Co.

The tune ("Villikins and His Dinah") and chorus are given as sung by John McCready at Groveland, Tuolumne Co., California, recorded by Sidney Robertson for the Archive of California Folk Music at the University of California, and published in *The Gold Rush Song Book,* compiled by Eleanora Black and Sidney Robertson (1940), pp. 10-11.


Oh, don't you re-mem-ber sweet Bet-sey from
Pike, Who crossed the big moun-tains with her lov-er
Ike, With two yoke of cat-tle, a large yel-low dog, A
tall shang-hai roost-er and one spot-ted hog.

*Chorus:*

Singing tooral lal looral lal looral lal la,
Singing tooral lal looral lal looral lal la,
Sing tooral lal looral, sing tooral lal la,
Singing tooral lal looral lal looral lal la.

One evening quite early they camped on the Platte,
'Twas near by the road on a green shady flat,
Where Betsey, sore-footed, lay down to repose—
With wonder Ike gazed on that Pike County rose.

Their wagon broke down with a terrible crash,
And out on the prairie rolled all kinds of trash;
A few little baby clothes done up with care—
'Twas rather suspicious, though all on the *square*.

The shanghai ran off, and their cattle all died;
That morning the last piece of bacon was fried;
Poor Ike was discouraged, and Betsey got mad,
The dog drooped his tail and looked wondrously sad.

They stopped at Salt Lake to inquire the way,
When Brigham declared that sweet Betsey should stay;
But Betsey got frightened and ran like a deer,
While Brigham stood pawing the ground like a steer.

They soon reached the desert, where Betsey gave out,
And down in the sand she lay rolling about;
While Ike, half distracted, looked on with surprise,
Saying, "Betsey, get up, you'll get sand in your eyes."

Sweet Betsey got up in a great deal of pain,
Declared she'd go back to Pike County again;
But Ike gave a sigh, and they fondly embraced,
And they travelled along with his arm round her waist.

They suddenly stopped on a very high hill,
With wonder looked down upon old Placerville;
Ike sighed when he said, and he cast his eyes down,
"Sweet Betsey, my darling, we've got to Hangtown."

Long Ike and sweet Betsey attended a dance;
Ike wore a pair of his Pike County pants;
Sweet Betsey was covered with ribbons and rings;
Says Ike, "You're an angel, but where are your wings?"

A miner said, "Betsey, will you dance with me?"
"I will that, old hoss, if you don't make too free;
But don't dance me hard; do you want to know why?
Dog on you! I'm chock full of strong alkali!"

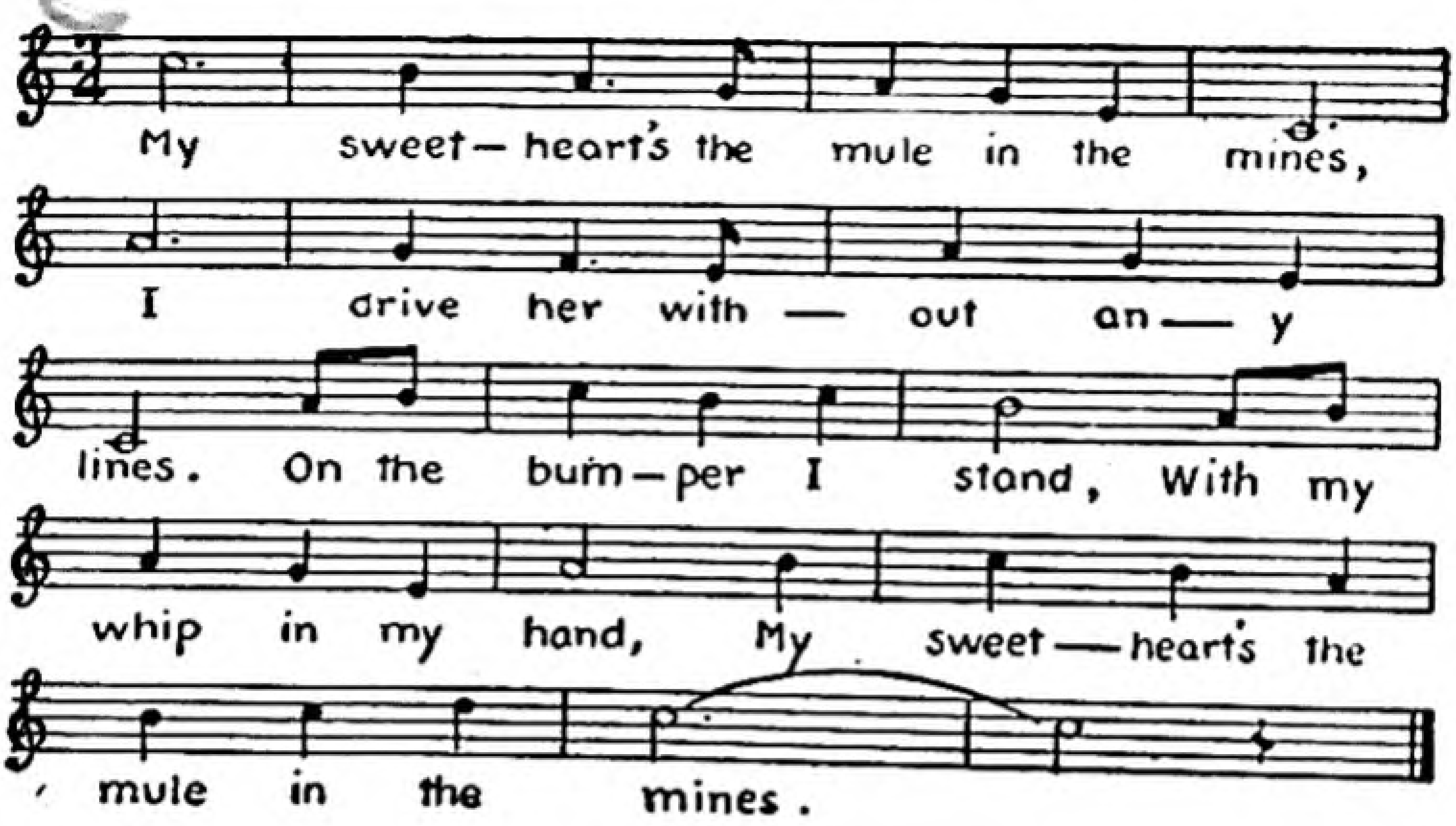
This Pike County couple got married of course,
And Ike became jealous—obtained a divorce;
Sweet Betsey, well satisfied, said with a shout,
"Good-by, you big lummox, I'm glad you've backed out!"

## MY SWEETHEART'S THE MULE IN THE MINES

My sweetheart's the mule in the mines,
I drive her without any lines.

---

From *Minstrels of the Mine Patch*, Songs and Stories of the Anthracite Industry, by George Korson, pp. 122-123. Copyright, 1938, by the University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.


My sweet—heart's the mule in the mines,
I drive her with — out an— y
lines. On the bum—per I stand, With my
whip in my hand, My sweet—heart's the
mule in the mines.

On the bumper I stand,
With my whip in my hand,
My sweetheart's the mule in the mines.

## Songs of the Farmer

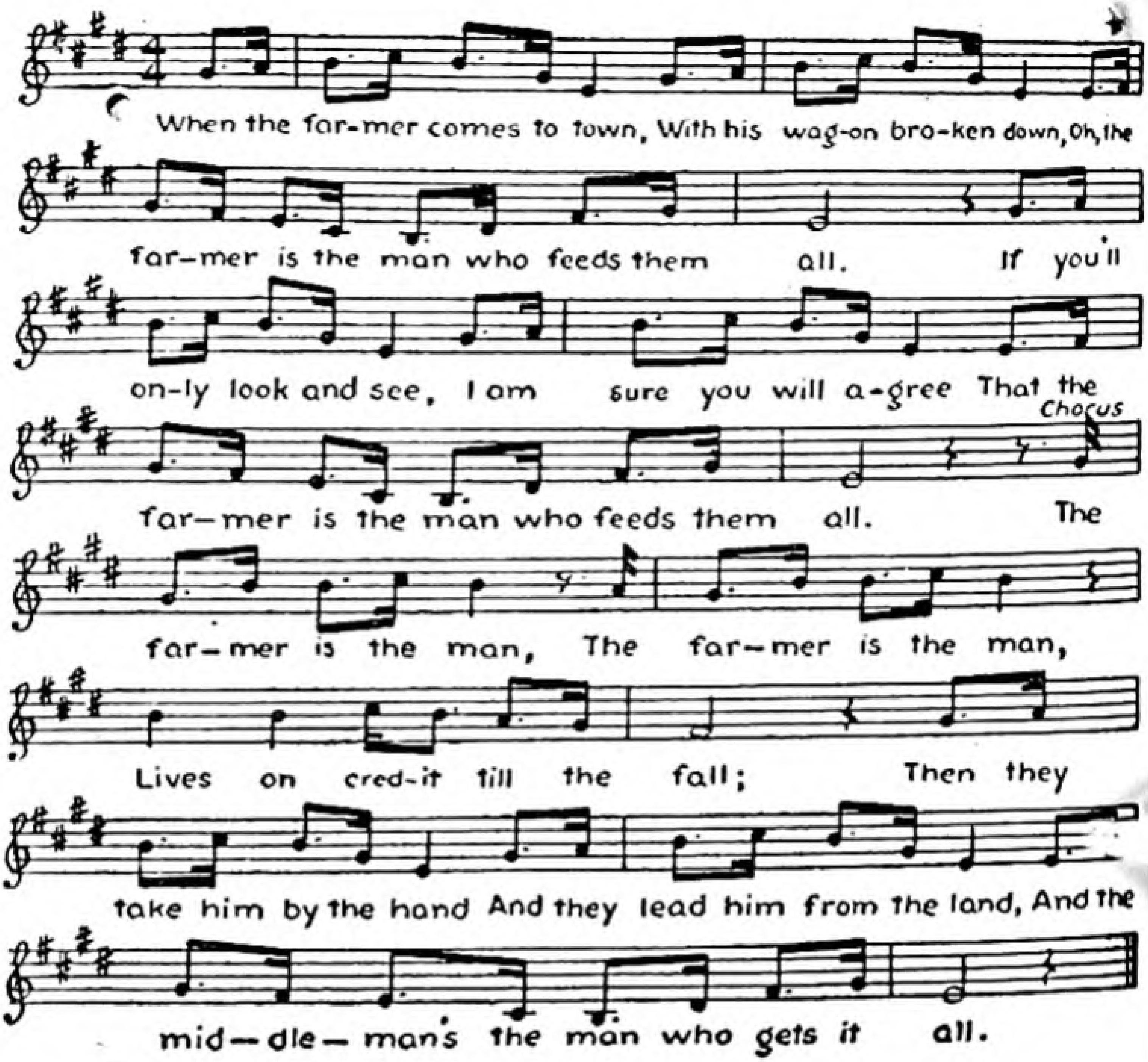
### THE FARMER COMES TO TOWN

When the farmer comes to town,
With his wagon broken down,
Oh, the farmer is the man who feeds them all.
If you'll only look and see,
I am sure you will agree
That the farmer is the man who feeds them all.

---

From Resettlement Song Sheets, [edited by Charles Seeger]. "Number 1 in a series of American songs rarely found in popular collections." Washington, D. C.: Special Skills Division of the Resettlement Administration. [1936-1937.]

In his *American Songbag*, Carl Sandburg says that he heard fragments of this song in Illinois in the early 1890's. "S. K. Barlow," he says, "a Galesburg milkman, who used to be a fiddler at dances near Galva, sang it for me as we washed eight- and two-gallon delivery cans and quart-measure cups on winter afternoons. W. W. Delaney said, 'As near as I can remember, that song came out in the 1860's just after the war.'"—C. S.


When the far-mer comes to town, With his wag-on bro-ken down, Oh, the
far-mer is the man who feeds them all. If you'll
on-ly look and see, I am sure you will a-gree That the
Chorus
far-mer is the man who feeds them all. The
far-mer is the man, The far-mer is the man,
Lives on cred-it till the fall; Then they
take him by the hand And they lead him from the land, And the
mid-dle-man's the man who gets it all.

*Chorus:*
The farmer is the man,
The farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall;
Then they take him by the hand
And they lead him from the land,
And the middleman's the man who gets it all.

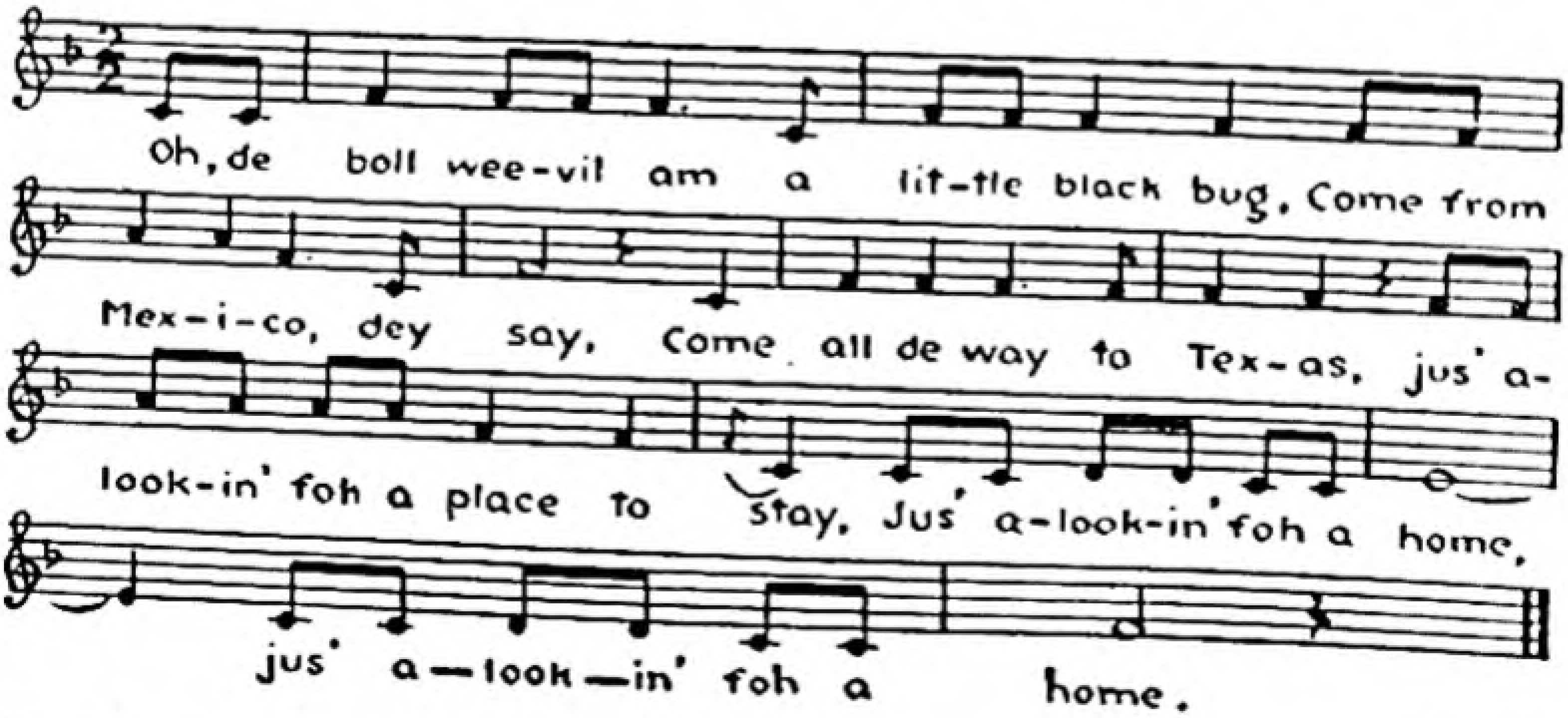
When the lawyer hangs around,
While the butcher cuts a pound,
Oh, the farmer is the man who feeds them all.
And the preacher and the cook
Go a-strolling by the brook,
Oh, the farmer is the man who feeds them all.

*Chorus:*
The farmer is the man,
The farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall:
With the int'rest rate so high,
It's a wonder he don't die,
For the mortgage man's the man who gets it all.

When the banker says he's broke,
And the merchant's up in smoke,
They forget that it's the farmer feeds them all.
It would put them to the test
If the farmer took a rest;
Then they'd know that it's the farmer feeds them all.

*Chorus:*
The farmer is the man,
The farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall:
And his pants are wearing thin,
His condition it's a sin;
He's forgot that he's the man who feeds them all.

## BOLL WEEVIL SONG


Oh, de boll wee-vil am a lit-tle black bug, Come from
Mex-i-co, dey say, Come all de way to Tex-as, jus' a-
look-in' foh a place to stay, Jus' a-look-in' foh a home,
jus' a—look—in' foh a home.

---

[1] From *The American Songbag*, by Carl Sandburg, pp. 8-10. Copyright, 1927, by Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York.

As you increase the farm products you increase the insects that destroy them.

Oh, de boll weevil am a little black bug,
  Come from Mexico, dey say,
Come all de way to Texas,
  Jus' a-lookin' foh a place to stay,
  Jus' a-lookin' foh a home, jus' a-lookin' foh a home.

De first time I seen de boll weevil,
  He was a-settin' on de square.
De next time I seen de boll weevil,
  He had all of his family dere,
  Jus' a-lookin' foh a home, jus' a-lookin' foh a home.

De farmer say to de weevil:
  "What make yo' head so red?"
De weevil say to de farmer,
  "It's a wondah I ain't dead,
  A-lookin' foh a home, jus' a-lookin' foh a home."

De farmer take de boll weevil,
  An' he put him in de hot san'.
De weevil say: "Dis is mighty hot,
  But I'll stan' it like a man,
  Dis'll be my home, it'll be my home."

De farmer take de boll weevil,
  An' he put him in a lump of ice;
De boll weevil say to de farmer:
  "Dis is mighty cool an' nice,
  It'll be my home, dis'll be my home."

---

You will pretty soon find out what my old Latin teacher told me about the meaning of ad infinitum. He said, "As you have learned in your entomology, you will find big bugs have little bugs on their backs to bite 'em, and the little bugs have smaller bugs and so ad infinitum." I fail to quote it accurately but you have the idea. . . .

My friends, the cotton boll weevil awakes in the spring, and by the first of September the generations coming from one pair will amount to 154,000,000, equal to the population of the Chinese Empire. What a blessing it would have been if a lark had been there to catch that pair in the beginning. (Laughter.)—*Speeches of William Henry Murray, Governor of Oklahoma* (1931), pp. 65-66.

De farmer take de boll weevil,
An' he put him in de fire.
De boll weevil say to de farmer:
"Here I are, here I are,
Dis'll be my home, dis'll be my home."

De boll weevil say to de farmer:
"You better leave me alone;
I done eat all yo' cotton,
Now I'm goin' to start on yo' corn,
I'll have a home, I'll have a home."

De merchant got half de cotton,
De boll weevil got de res'.
Didn't leave de farmer's wife
But one old cotton dress,
An' it's full of holes, it's full of holes.

De farmer say to de merchant:
"We's in an awful fix;
De boll weevil et all de cotton up
An' lef' us only sticks,
We's got no home, we's got no home."

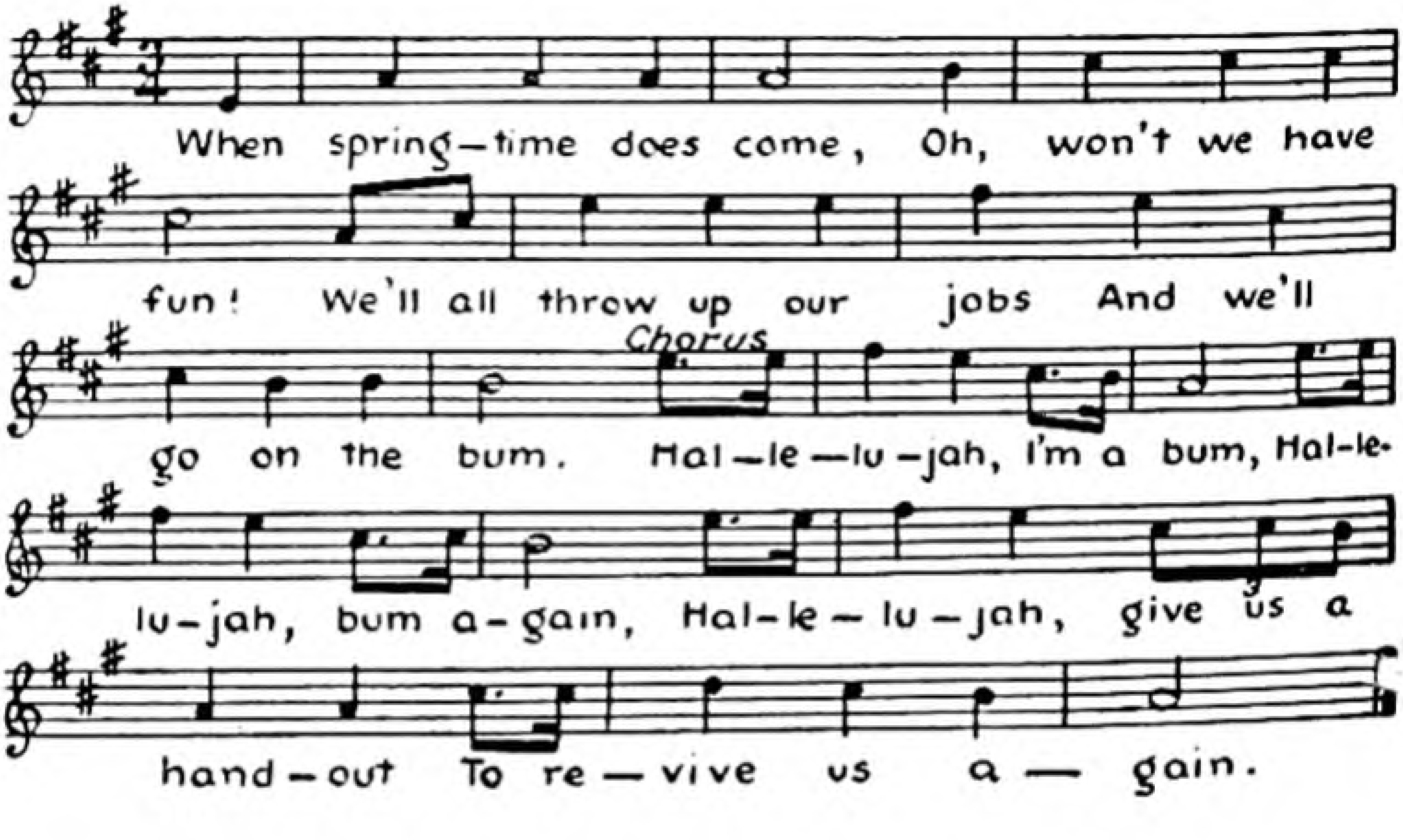
De farmer say to de merchant:
"We ain't made but only one bale,
An' befoh we'll give yo' dat one
We'll fight an' go to jail,
We'll have a home, we'll have a home."

De cap'n say to de missus:
"What d' you t'ink o' dat?
De boll weevil done make a nes'
In my bes' Sunday hat,
Goin' to have a home, goin' to have a home."

An' if anybody should ax you
Who it was dat made dis song,
Jus' tell 'em 'twas a [black-skinned farmer]
Wid a paih o' blue duckin's on,
Ain' got no home, ain' got no home.

## Hobo and Jailhouse Songs

### HALLELUJAH, BUM AGAIN


When spring—time does come, Oh, won't we have
fun! We'll all throw up our jobs And we'll
Chorus
go on the bum. Hal—le—lu—jah, I'm a bum, Hal-le-
lu—jah, bum a—gain, Hal—le—lu—jah, give us a
hand—out To re—vive us a— gain.

When springtime does come,
Oh, won't we have fun!
We'll all throw up our jobs
And we'll go on the bum.

---

From *The Hobo's Hornbook*, A Repertory for a Gutter Jongleur, collected and annotated by George Milburn, pp. 97-101. Copyright, 1930, by George Milburn. New York: Ives Washburn.

It is hardly safe to classify the following widely-sung ballad as a Wobbly song. There is some dispute as to its origin. Budd L. McKillips, who has himself written some first-rate hobo poetry, has given me the following notes on "Hallelujah, Bum Again's" history:

"A member of the I. W. W. [Joe Hill] is credited with having written the words to 'Hallelujah, I'm a Bum.' The question of authorship isn't worth an argument, but if anybody will take the trouble to do some investigating, he will find that 'Hallelujah, I'm a Bum' was a lilting, carefree song at least eight years before the I. W. W. came squalling into the industrial world. . . . The song was found scribbled on the wall of a Kansas City jail cell where an old hobo known as 'One-Finger Ellis,' had spent the night, recovering from an overd[illegible] of rotgut whiskey."

. . . Sung to the hymn tune, "Hallelujah, Thine the Glory."—G. M.

*Chorus:*
Hallelujah, I'm a bum,
Hallelujah, bum again,
Hallelujah, give us a handout
To revive us again.

Oh, springtime has come,
And I'm just out of jail,
Ain't got no money,
It all went for bail.

I went up to a house
And I knocked on the door.
A lady came out, says,
"You been here before!"

I went up to a house,
Asked for some bread;
A lady came out, says,
"The baker is dead."

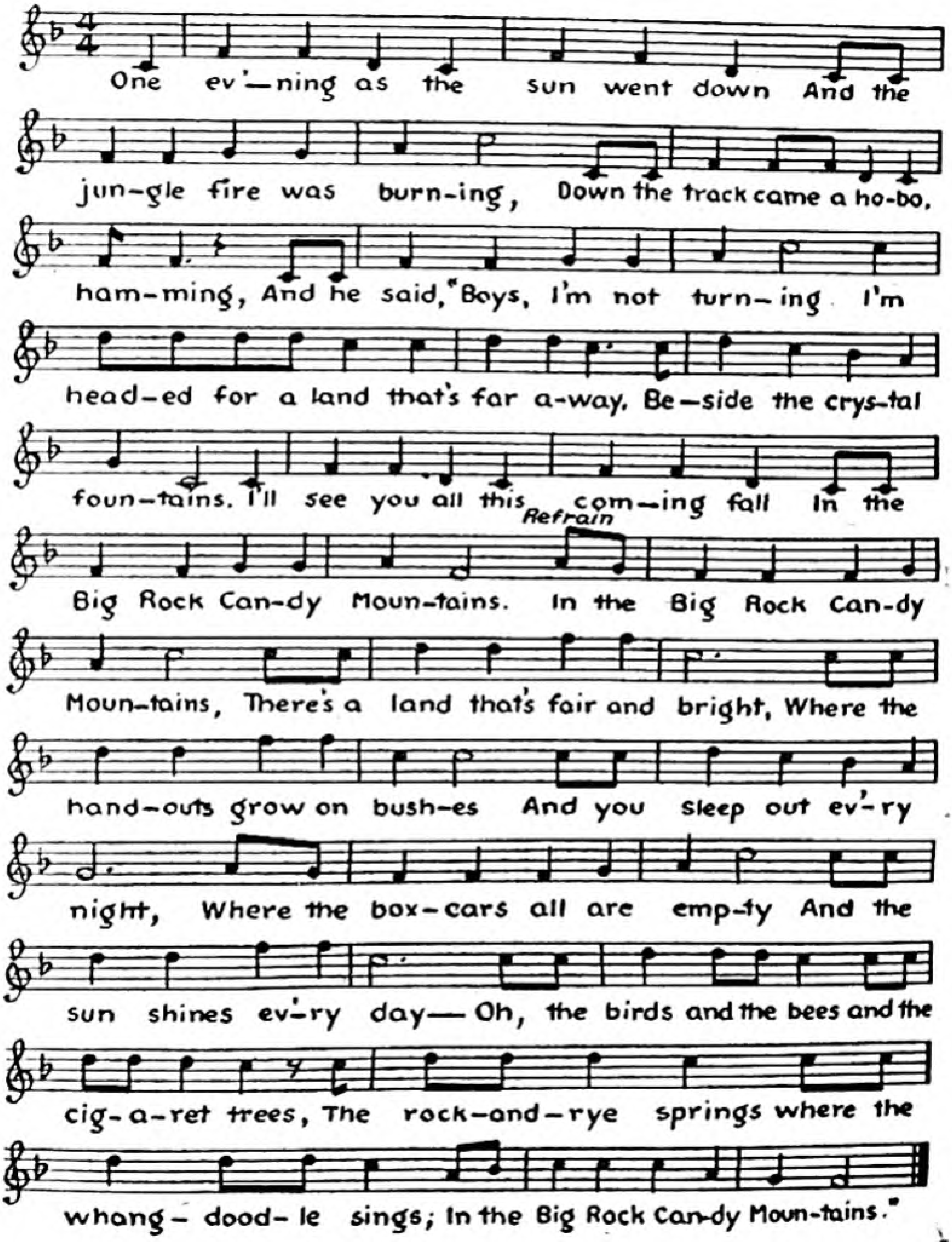
I went up to a house,
Asked for a pair of pants;
A lady came out, says,
"I don't clothe no tramps!"

I went into a saloon,
And I bummed him for a drink;
He give me a glass
And he showed me the sink.

Oh, I love my boss,
And my boss loves me;
That is the reason
I'm so hun-ga-ree!

"Why don't you go to work
Like all the other men do?"
"How the hell we going to work
When there ain't no work to do?"

## THE BIG ROCK CANDY MOUNTAINS


One ev'—ning as the sun went down And the
jun—gle fire was burn—ing, Down the track came a ho-bo,
ham—ming, And he said, "Boys, I'm not turn—ing I'm
head—ed for a land that's far a-way, Be—side the crys—tal
foun—tains. I'll see you all this com—ing fall In the
Refrain
Big Rock Can—dy Moun—tains. In the Big Rock Can—dy
Moun—tains, There's a land that's fair and bright, Where the
hand—outs grow on bush—es And you sleep out ev'—ry
night, Where the box—cars all are emp—ty And the
sun shines ev'—ry day— Oh, the birds and the bees and the
cig—a—ret trees, The rock—and—rye springs where the
whang— dood— le sings; In the Big Rock Can-dy Moun-tains."

---

*Ibid.*, pp. 86-89.

One ev'ning as the sun went down
And the jungle fire was burning,
Down the track came a hobo, hamming,[1]
And he said, "Boys, I'm not turning.
I'm headed for a land that's far away,
Beside the crystal fountains.
I'll see you all this coming fall
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

*Refrain:*

"In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
There's a land that's fair and bright,
Where the handouts grow on bushes
And you sleep out ev'ry night,
Where the boxcars all are empty
And the sun shines ev'ry day—
Oh, the birds and the bees and the cigaret trees,
The rock-and-rye springs where the whangdoodle sings,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

"In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
All the cops have wooden legs,
And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth,
And the hens lay softboiled eggs.
The farmers' trees are full of fruit,
And the barns are full of hay.
Oh, I'm bound to go where there ain't no snow,
Where the sleet don't fall and the wind don't blow,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

"In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
You never change your socks,

---

When the hobo bard smites his lyre and sings of Utopia, a rare spirit of burlesque moves through his song. The following selection is very similar to that better known hobo hymn, "The Dying Hobo," and a few of the lines are identical.—G. M.

---

[1] *Ham*, to walk across country. From the traditional ham actor whose company gets stranded on the road, and who is forced to walk back to the city. —G. M.

And the little streams of alkyhol
Come trickling down the rocks.
The shacks[1] all have to tip their hats
And the railroad bulls are blind,
There's a lake of stew and of whisky, too,
You can paddle all around in a big canoe,
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

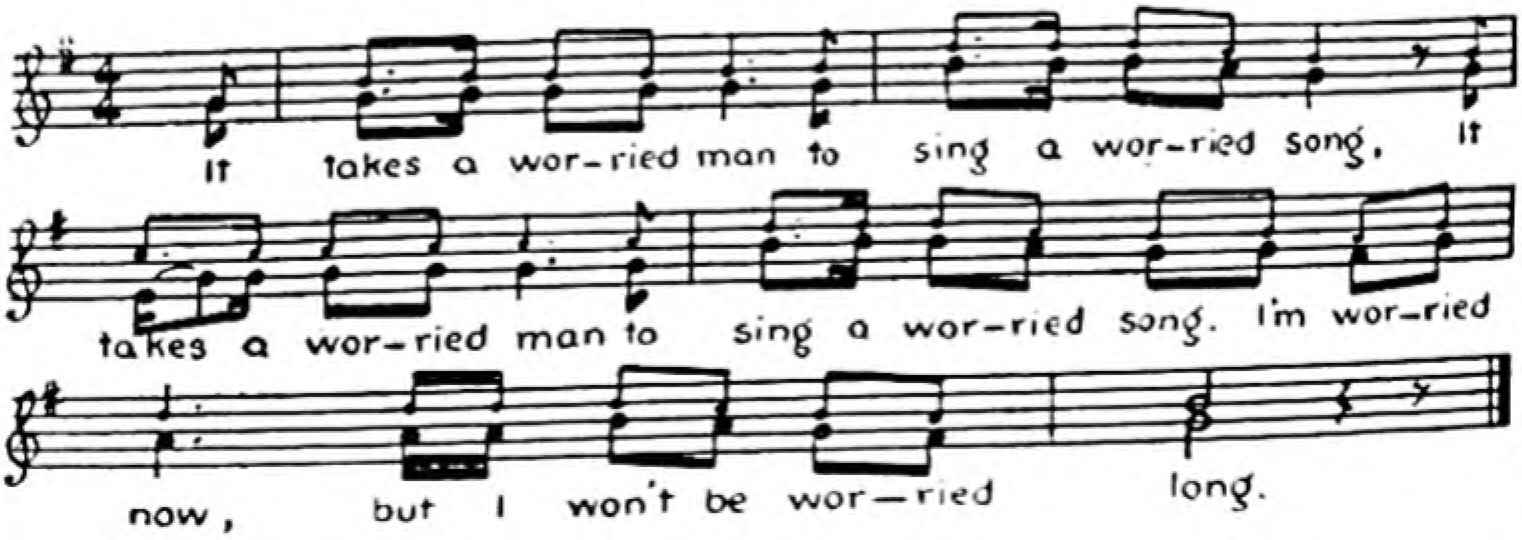
"In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
The jails are made of tin,
And you can bust right out again
As soon as they put you in.
There ain't no shorthandled shovels,
No axes, saws or picks—
I'm a-going to stay where you sleep all day—
Oh, they boiled in oil the inventor of toil
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

"Oh, come with me, and we'll go see
The Big Rock Candy Mountains."

## WORRIED MAN BLUES

*Chorus:*

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song.
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long.


It takes a wor-ried man to sing a wor-ried song, It
takes a wor-ried man to sing a wor-ried song. I'm wor-ried
now, but I won't be wor—ried long.

---

[1] Brakemen.

---

From Perfect Record No. 7-05-55, sung by the Carter Family with autoharp and guitar. Transcribed by Charles Seeger.

I went across the river, and I lay down to sleep,
I went across the river, and I lay down to sleep,
When I woke up with the shackles on my feet.

Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg,
Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg,
And on each link is initial of my name.

I asked the judge what might be my fine,
I asked the judge what might be my fine.
"Twenty-one years on the R. C. Mountain line."

The train arrived, sixteen coaches long,
The train arrived, sixteen coaches long.
The girl I love is on that train and gone.

If any one asks you who composed this song,
If any one asks you who composed this song,
Tell him it was I and I sing it all day long.

## Mountain Songs

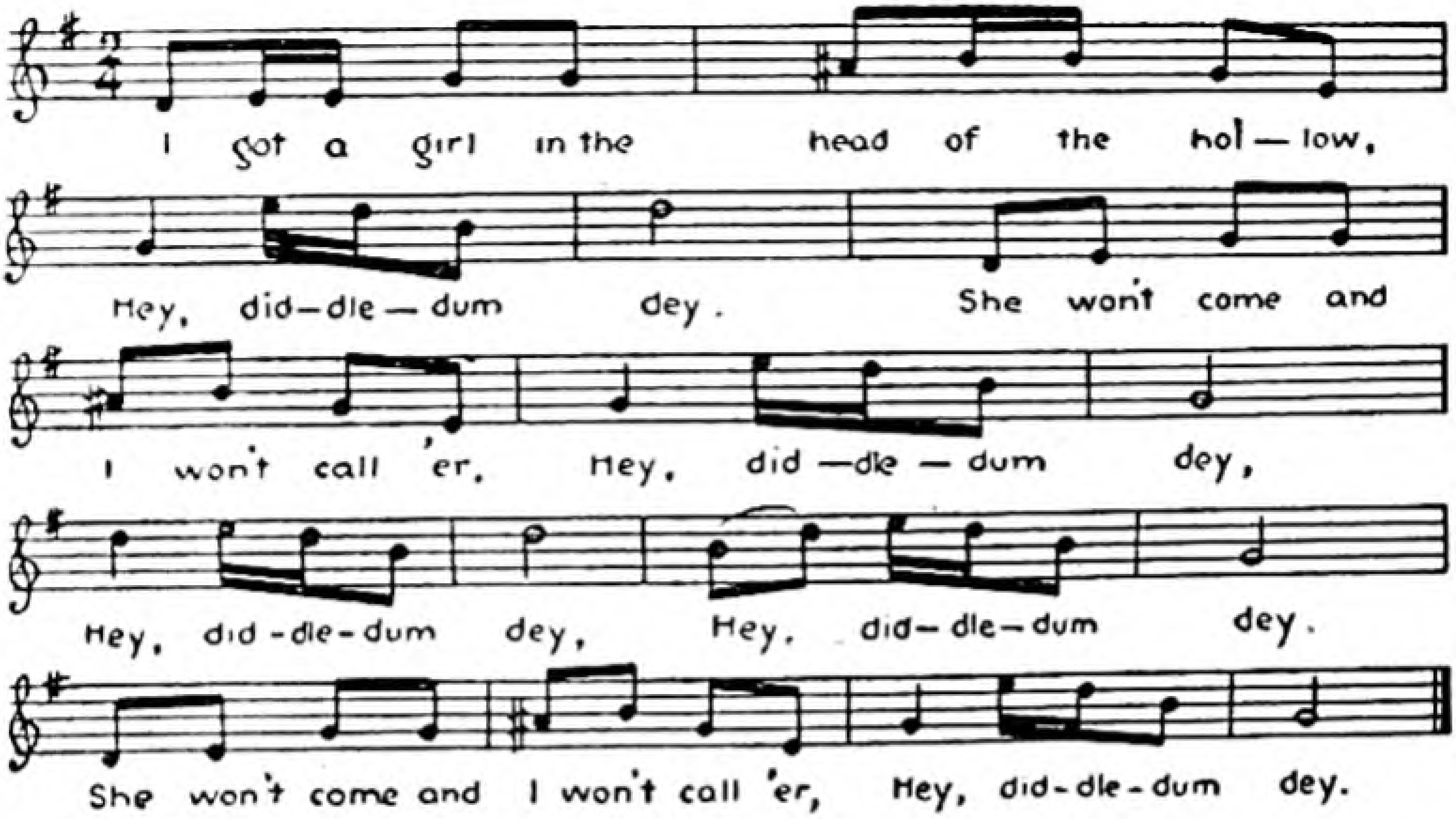
### SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN

I got a girl in the head of the hollow,
Hey, diddledum dey.
She won't come and I won't call 'er.
Hey, diddledum dey,
Hey, diddledum dey,
Hey, diddledum dey.
She won't come and I won't call 'er,
Hey, diddledum dey.

---

From *30 and 1 Folksongs* (From the Southern Mountains), compiled and arranged by Bascom Lamar Lunsford and Lamar Stringfield, pp. 24-25. Copyright, 1929, by Carl Fischer, Inc., New York. International copyright secured.

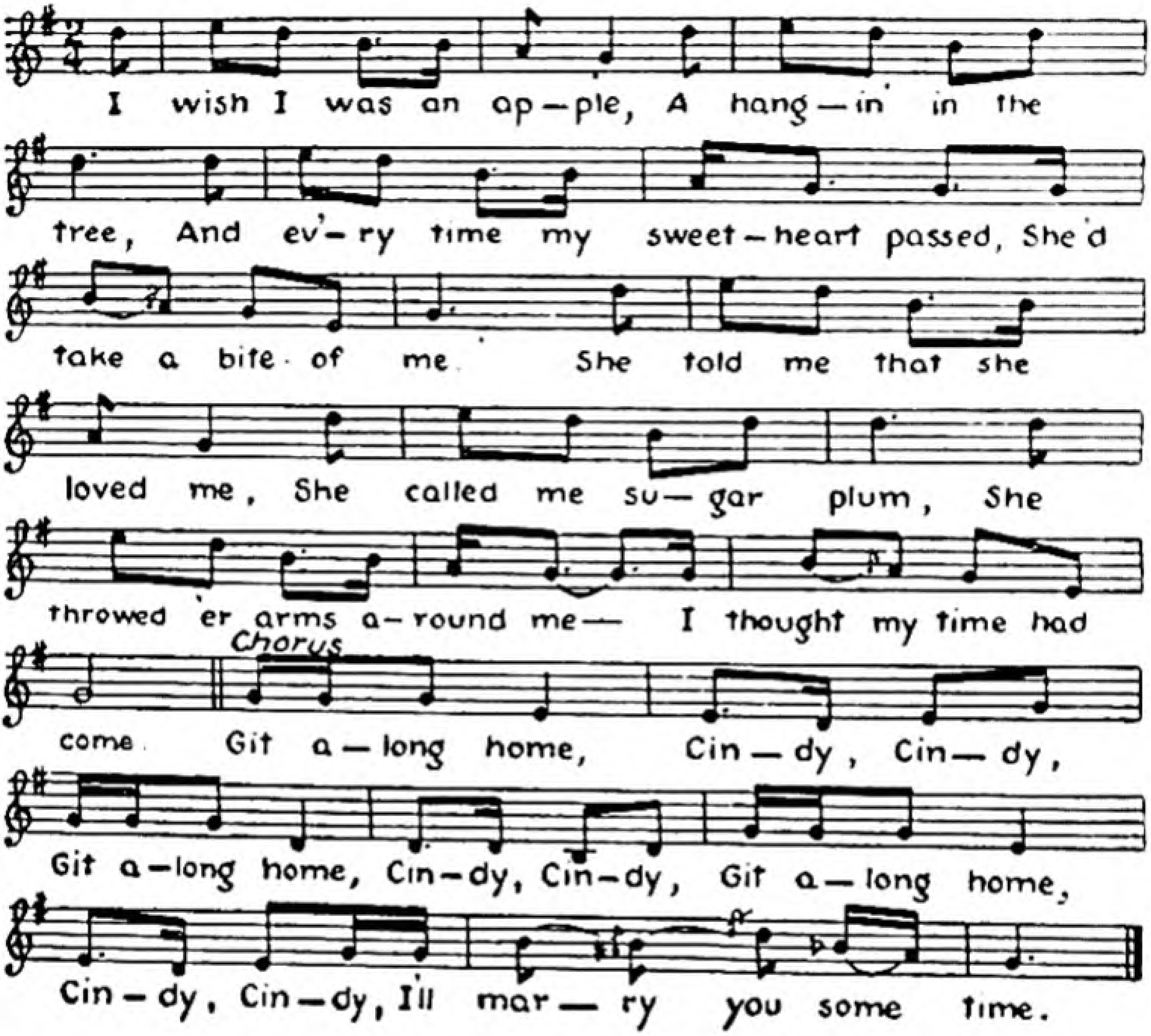
This song, which is also used as a fiddle tune, has many stanzas in addition to those given above. It is sung and played in the Carolinas, East Tennessee, and Kentucky.—B. L. L.


I got a girl in the head of the hol — low,
Hey, did-dle-dum dey. She won't come and
I won't call 'er, Hey, did-dle-dum dey,
Hey, did-dle-dum dey, Hey, did-dle-dum dey.
She won't come and I won't call 'er, Hey, did-dle-dum dey.

She sits up with ole Si Hall,
Hey, diddledum dey.
Me and Jeff can't go there a-tall,
Hey, diddledum dey,
Hey, diddledum dey,
Hey, diddledum dey.
Me and Jeff can't go there a-tall,
Hey, diddledum dey.

Some-a these days before very long,
Hey, diddledum dey,
I'll get that gal and a-home I'll run,
Hey, diddledum dey,
Hey, diddledum dey,
Hey, diddledum dey.
I'll get that gal and a-home I'll run,
Hey, diddledum dey.

## CINDY


I wish I was an ap-ple, A hang-in' in the tree, And ev'-ry time my sweet-heart passed, She'd take a bite of me. She told me that she loved me, She called me su-gar plum, She throwed 'er arms a-round me— I thought my time had come.
Chorus
Git a-long home, Cin-dy, Cin-dy, Git a-long home, Cin-dy, Cin-dy, Git a-long home, Cin-dy, Cin-dy, I'll mar-ry you some time.

I wish I was an apple,
A-hangin' in the tree,
And ev'ry time my sweetheart passed,
She'd take a bite of me.
She told me that she loved me,
She called me sugar plum,
She throwed 'er arms around me—
I thought my time had come.

---

*Ibid.;* pp. 42-43.
A "crackerjack" party tune, with countless stanzas.—B. L. L.

*Chorus:*
Git along home, Cindy, Cindy,
Git along home, Cindy, Cindy,
Git along home, Cindy, Cindy,
I'll marry you some time.

She took me to the parlor,
She cooled me with her fan,
She swore that I's the purtiest thing
In the shape of mortal man.
Oh where did you git your liquor,
Oh where did you git your dram,
I got it from a [bootlegger]
Away down in Rockinham.

Cindy got religion,
She had it once before,
When she heard my old banjo
She 'uz the first un on the floor.
I wish I had a needle,
As fine as I could sew,
I'd sew the girls to my coat tail,
And down the road I'd go.

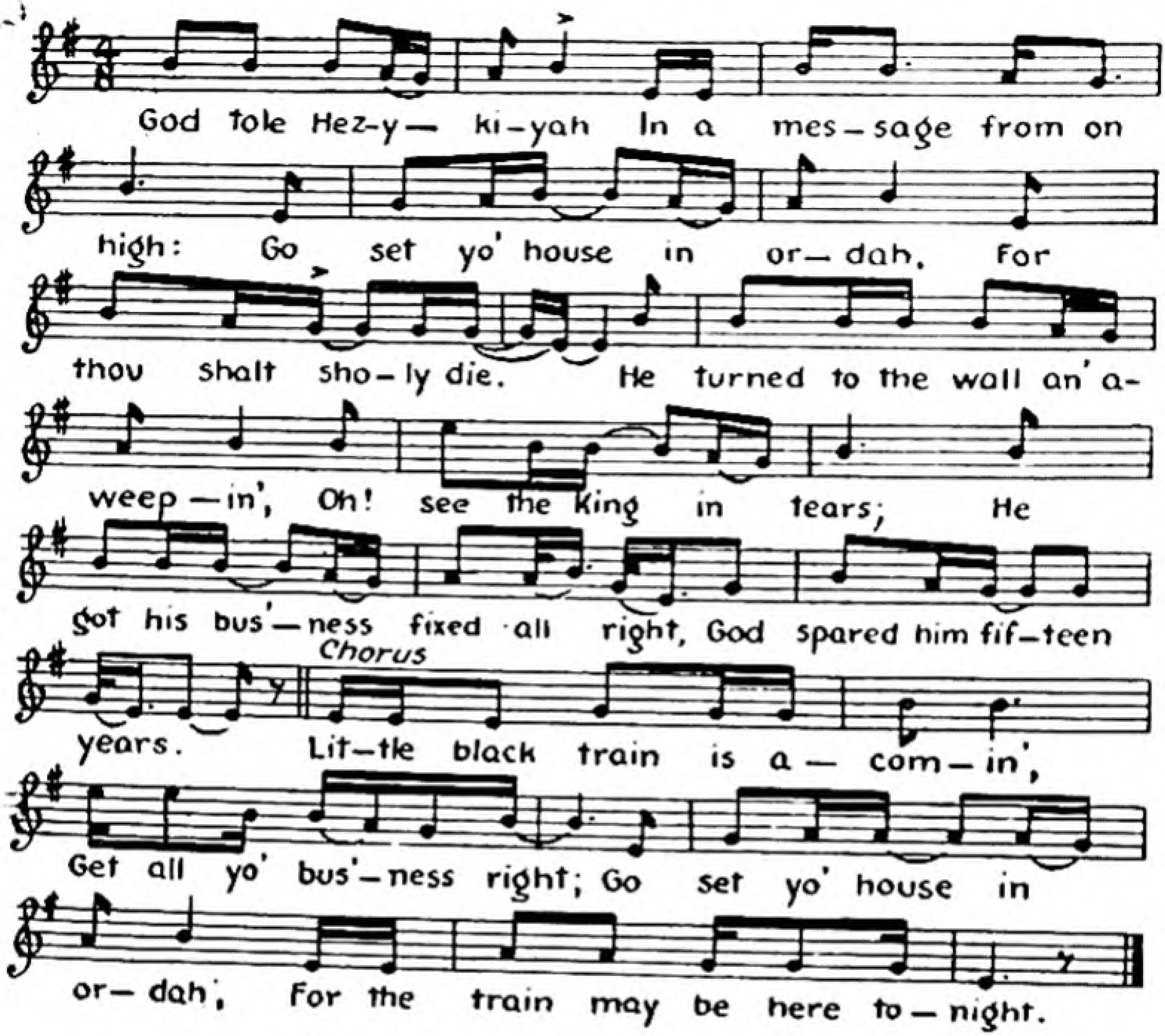
## Spirituals

### LITTLE BLACK TRAIN IS A-COMIN'

God tole Hezykiah
In a message from on high:
Go set yo' house in ordah,
For thou shalt sholy die.
He turned to the wall an' a-weepin',
Oh! see the King in tears;
He got his bus'ness fixed all right,
God spared him fifteen years.

---

From *The Negro Sings a New Heaven,* by Mary Allen Grissom, pp. 10-11. Copyright, 1930, by the University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill.


God tole Hez-y— ki-yah In a mes—sage from on high: Go set yo' house in or—dah, For thou shalt sho-ly die. He turned to the wall an' a-weep—in', Oh! see the King in tears; He got his bus'—ness fixed all right, God spared him fif—teen years.
Chorus
Lit—tle black train is a— com—in', Get all yo' bus'—ness right; Go set yo' house in or—dah, For the train may be here to—night.

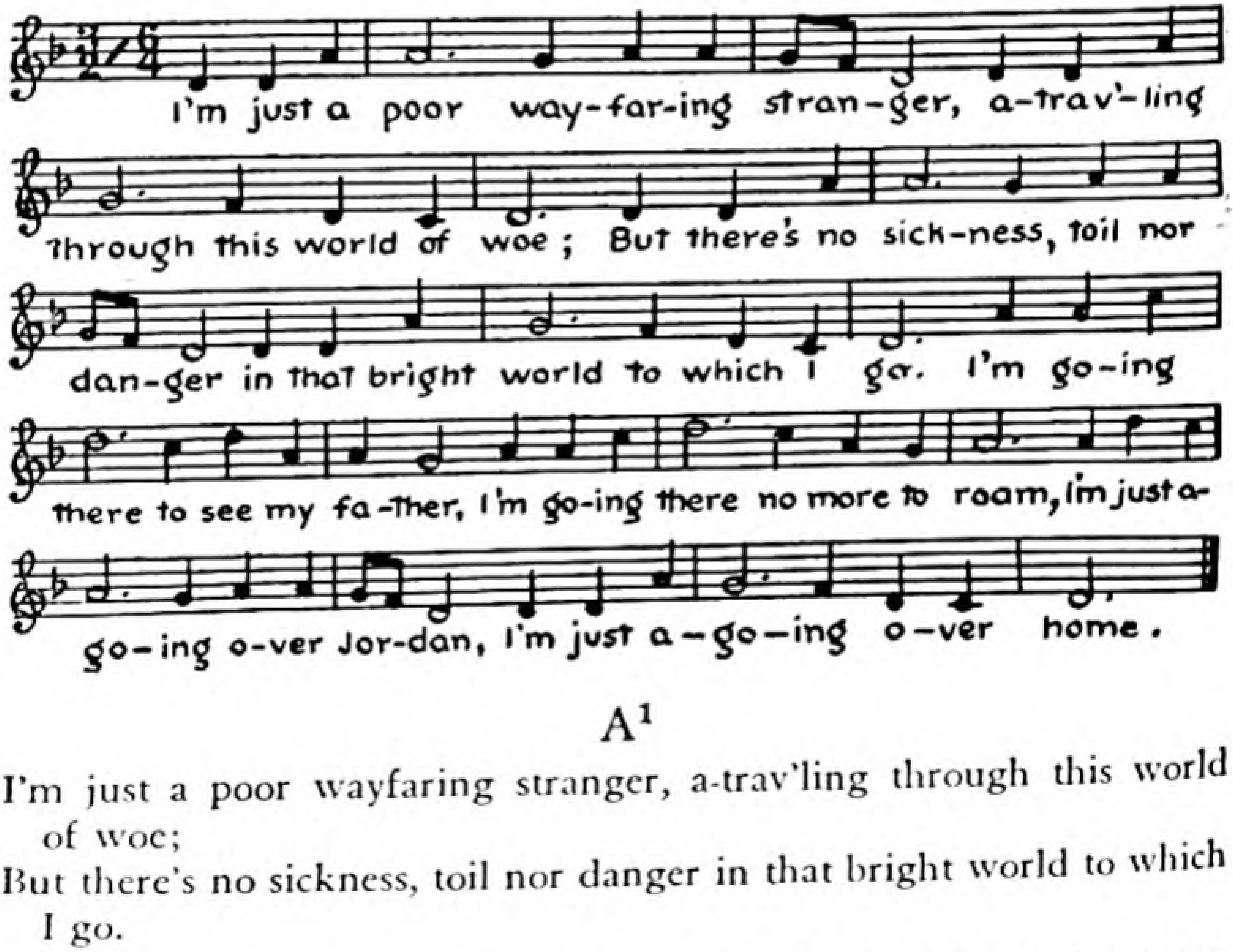
*Chorus:*

Little black train is a-comin',
Get all yo' bus'ness right:
Go set yo' house in ordah,
For the train may be here tonight.

Go tell that ballroom lady,
All filled with worldly pride,
That little black train is a-comin',
Prepare to take a ride.
That little black train and engine
An' a little baggage car,
With idle thoughts and wicked deeds,
Must stop at the judgment bar.

There was a po' young man in darkness,
Cared not for the gospel light,
Suddenly a whistle blew
From a little black train in sight.
"Oh, death, will you not spare me?
I'm just in my wicked plight.
Have mercy, Lord, do hear me,
Pray come an' set me right."
But death had fixed his shackles
About his soul so tight,
Just befo' he got his bus'ness fixed,
The train rolled in that night.

## WAYFARING STRANGER


I'm just a poor way-far-ing stran-ger, a-trav'-ling
through this world of woe; But there's no sick-ness, toil nor
dan-ger in that bright world to which I go. I'm go-ing
there to see my fa-ther, I'm go-ing there no more to roam, I'm just a-
go-ing o-ver Jor-dan, I'm just a-go-ing o-ver home.

### A[1]

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger, a-trav'ling through this world of woe;
But there's no sickness, toil nor danger in that bright world to which I go.

---

From Resettlement Song sheets, [edited by Charles Seeger]. "Number 9 in a series of American songs rarely found in popular collections." Washington, D. C.: Special Skills Division of the Resettlement Administration. [1936-1937.]

---

[1] L. L. McDowell, of Smithville, Tennessee, says that this is the tune and verse sung by the old settlers of DeKalb County, Tennessee. Additional stanzas

I'm going there to see my father, I'm going there no more to roam,
I'm just a-going over Jordan, I'm just a-going over home.
I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger, a-trav'ling through this world of woe;
But there's no sickness, toil nor danger in that bright world to which I go.
I'm going there to see my mother, I'm going there no more to roam,
I'm just a-going over Jordan, I'm just a-going over home.

## B

The following modern verses from Virginia and Florida respectively have been received:

Our fathers dear fought for our liberty.
Across the ocean they did roam,
They suffered pain and many hardships.
For in this land to build a home.

We've lived here many generations,
And many dear ones here have died,
But still our lives are filled with trouble,
In vain a helping hand we've cried.

I'm just a poor and lonesome traveler,
Behind a mule that's powerful slow,
A-creaking on to debt and worry,
The only place that I can go.

My father lived and died a farmer,
A-reaping less than he did sow;
And now I travel in his footsteps,
A-knowing less than he did know.

---

were made by changing the words "father" and "mother" to "brother," "sister," etc.

In his book, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, G. P. Jackson points out that the tune of the "Wayfaring Stranger" is almost identical to that of "Parting Friends," learned by J. G. McCurry, editor of the *Social Harp*, from Mrs. Catherine Penn in 1829.—C. S.

# Suggestions for Further Reading and Study

For bibliography, see Ralph S. Boggs, "(Folklore) Bibliography for 1937" and each year thereafter, *Southern Folklore Quarterly,* March, 1938, to date; and Alan Lomax and Sidney Robertson Cowell, *American Folk Song and Folklore: A Regional Bibliography* (New York, Hinds, Hayden and Eldredge, 1942), partly reproduced in John A. and Alan Lomax, with Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger, *Folk-Song: U.S.A.* (New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1949).

For general reference, see Maria Leach and Jerome Fried, *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend,* 2 vols. (New York, 1949-1950); Milton Rugoff, *A Harvest of World Folk Tales* (New York, The Viking Press, 1949); and Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York, The Dryden Press, 1946).

For articles, notes, reviews, and news, see *Journal of American Folklore* (Philadelphia), *New York Folklore Quarterly* (Cooperstown), Publications of the Texas Folklore Society (Austin), *Southern Folklore Quarterly* (Gainesville, Florida), and *Western Folklore* (Berkeley, California).

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For lists of recordings, see Kolb, *A Treasury of Folk Songs;* Lomax, *Folk-Song: U.S.A.,* and Ben C. Lumpkin, *Folksongs on Records* (Boulder, Colorado, 1948).

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